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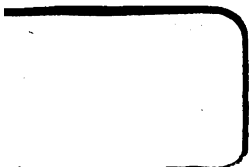
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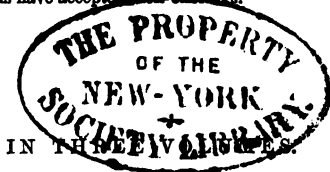
RY

AUTHOR OF

"MEMORIALS OF LORD GAMBIER," "TRANSLATIONS FROM THE GERMAN OF
J. P. RICHTER." &c.

The black-winged Erinnys
Will never enter those homes where the hands are lifted up in prayer,
And the gods have accepted their offerings.

ÆSCHYLUS.



VOL. I.

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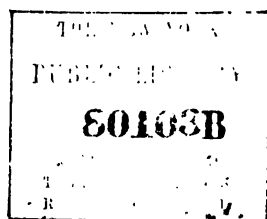
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EMB



THE
HEIRESS AND HER LOVERS.



Hecuba. Oh chariot of the earth, and thou who reignest in thy throne over the earth,

Whoe'er thou art, most difficult to comprehend even by conjecture! Jove! Whether thou art a necessity of nature or the mind of mortals,

Thou guidest all mortal affairs according to justice.

Menelaus. What is this? Thou hast made a new prayer to the gods!

EURIPIDES.

A saying there is of old, among men renowned,
That thou canst not thoroughly judge of the life of a mortal
Before he dies, whether it has been good or bad.

SOPHOCLES.

In a sheltered nook on one of those bays
in Ireland, where the sea comes smiling up
to the greensward, and encircles with gentle
embrace the old walls of the ruined castle
which is sure to have been built in such a

spot; in that land of strong contrasts, while the huge waves are dashing against the brown cliffs on the other side of that same mountain, here you may see trees of luxuriant growth, and the green arbutus with its red and purple berries reflected in the calm waters. In Ireland, all is either brilliant sunshine or dark shadow, and its scenery, its skies, and the countenances of its genuine sons, are all either smiles or tears.

Dingleford Bay is one of the loveliest of these favoured spots, which must make any traveller who should chance to see it exclaim, "How I should like to live here!"

But travellers seldom see such places, for many of these beautiful bays are unapproachable by any good road, and it is seldom that any modern habitation can be found in them, although one of these old castles, attributed to King John or one of the somewhat less ancient castellated houses of the Desmond period, is generally perched on a rocky height that juts out into the sea. In most of these, the overthrown towers and the fortified gables tell the tale of many sieges, while the lofty rooms which may

sometimes still be seen in the upper stories, with their huge chimney-pieces, mulioned windows, and carved architraves, evince a degree of splendour which is not to be found in any buildings erected since the wars of Queen Elizabeth's reign.

To approach these favoured spots one must either walk, or hire some surefooted animal from the ugly little modern town some ten miles off. Town I say, for there are no villages in Ireland; the country near these little towns is generally bare, and there is scarcely anything to relieve the dull and dreary appearance of its straight rows of white houses; while, small as these houses are, they seem to have been intended for a less poor set of beings than those who now inhabit them: the windows being mostly too large to be kept in repair, and the broken panes are either boarded over or stuffed with some cast-off clothes or old hats.

"Certainly I should not like to live in this country," says the traveller, in driving through the little street and its bad smells, as fast as the dense population—the pigs,

geese, and beggars, who congregate chiefly in the middle of it—will allow.

But I am not going to detain you in any of these ugly towns, which, alas ! speak but too plainly of the miserable results of many centuries of the grievous and anomalous condition to which few other countries have been so strangely subjected.

You are to come with me into one of those beautiful bays where the old castellated house of the middle ages is still inhabited, and where the only penalty it seems obliged to pay for having preserved its existence so long, is that a seaport town at the mouth of the river Dingle, two miles off, can be seen from some of the broad windows of its upper story. Yet in this town the modern white houses are partly hidden by garden trees, and the modernised church has a high belfry-tower, which some antiquarians say is as old as one of the real round towers of Ireland. So there is little to interfere with the enjoyment which Dingleford Castle ought to afford to its fortunate inhabitants. For they still possess the same mountains and bogs, and broad

fertile plains, which were granted to Mr. Verdon's ancestor by Edward the First, and although these estates are much encumbered by the present owner, yet the family is still one of the richest in the county, and the good taste which characterised those bygone ages is still evinced in the preservation of whatever beauty the old edifice affords, both in its grotesque architecture and well-chosen position.

The donjon-keep—the most ancient part of the long pile of buildings—stands on a higher part of the steep rocky height, and interposes its massive wall as if to protect the other portion of the castle from the rude sea spray, which strong westerly winds sometimes bring into the usually sheltered bay; but the woody mountain-side slopes upwards from above this old donjon-keep; and from its battlements you look straight down the perpendicular rock at its base into the sea. Yet from the south front of the castle buildings, terraced gardens slope like giant steps down to the parterres, or to what in old times would have been called the “plaisaunce;” and here the well-cultured flower-beds are

only separated from the salt sea by a luxuriant myrtle-hedge.

At the south-western angle of the irregular structure there is an octagon tower, very like one of those at Sherborne Castle in Dorsetshire, which are said to have been built by Sir Walter Raleigh, therefore it had probably been added to an older portion of the half-ruined Dingleford Castle about the same period.

This tower, as well as the narrow wing which connected it with the massive central buildings, had been uninhabited for upwards of a century, and would probably have remained in the same dilapidated state, as there was plenty of room in the other parts for the large family of its owners, and even the many friends who often visited it. But about thirty years ago, Aunt Mary took a great fancy to this tower. It was said to be haunted, and that was the reason it had been suffered to fall into decay. But Aunt Mary was what is called an odd, strong-minded little body, and laughed at such notions, and would not believe that those black marks in the old oak boards, which

were plainly visible along the floor of the gallery and on the steps of the little turret stairs all the way up to the large upper room of the tower, were really stains of blood. Nor could she be induced to put faith in half the wild tales that were told about those bloody marks; nor would she believe that Marian Verdon, a beautiful ancestress of the family, had really been murdered in that tower by her husband.

So, after the second long summer visit Aunt Mary made to Dingleford Castle, she persuaded its then owner to have the long gallery of this haunted wing repaired, and she actually took up her quarters in the very room at the top of the tower where the dire deed had been committed. So, from that time its name was changed from the "Haunted Tower" to the more pleasant-sounding one of "Aunt Mary's Bower."

Some ill-natured people accounted for this strange fancy of Aunt Mary's by saying that it was no wonder she preferred to live in the abode of ghosts, because she looked so like one herself; and others even hinted that such a pale face and deformed figure,

and those strangely bright eyes, that seem to look with such a keenly-searching gaze into every one's heart, could only belong to a person who had committed some great crime.

Yet most of the Verdon family were very fond of Aunt Mary, although she was not even related to them. The children especially, who, before her arrival at Dingleford Castle, could never be induced to enter that haunted tower after dark, would gladly follow her up the little dark turret stairs, and were most grateful if she allowed them to take up their playthings and pass an hour in her room. They even delighted in watching her as she sat at her table in the large western window, although it was covered with the strangest set of things. Bottles and crucibles, mathematical instruments and microscopes, odd-looking old books with motheaten covers, and full of grotesque engravings of hands and feet and magic signs. Illuminated missals and parchments, inscribed with what the children's nurses called unearthly characters. They, the nurses, were sure Aunt Mary was

a witch, or sorceress, and some of the peasantry would have it that she was a fairy changeling, and said she would one day spirit away some of the young Verdens. But what delighted those children the most was, that on fine summer nights Aunt Mary would take them up on the leads over the octagon-room and show them the stars and the moon through her telescope. They soon learnt almost as much astronomy as she knew herself. At least she told them they did, for although Aunt Mary had read the chief books that had been written on astronomy since the days of Plato down to the present time, and though she was personally acquainted with Herschel, Cuvier, and Mrs. Somerville, she stoutly maintained that she knew very little about astronomy or anything else.

Aunt Mary was called strong minded, because she travelled about the world a great deal by herself; because she knew several languages, and had been intimately acquainted with many of the wits and learned persons of her day. And then she could occasionally say sharp things and

utter home truths to persons who pretended to know much, or who said or did very foolish things, or were too prone to find fault with their neighbours and friends.

But persons who are loved by children have seldom much bitterness in their composition, and although Aunt Mary generally enlivened the circle in which she happened to be placed, and often contrived to make others look upon the brightest side of things; yet, when any of the few friends who had the privilege of visiting her in her own room, where she read or studied during the chief portion of the day, came upon her unawares, they often found her in tears.

"I cannot cure myself," she would say, when chided for thus indulging her sorrow. "I can learn no philosophy and very little resignation from all these books; with all my strength of purpose and disposition to rejoice and induce others to do the same, I am often most weak and childishly foolish: weaker than any body," she would say, with a sad smile.

Yet none of her most intimate friends knew what cause she had for sadness. It is

true, she had lost both her parents and one sister; but as such losses are often experienced by persons who have attained the age—the “certain age,” which even thirty years ago Aunt Mary had reached; and as she had still two sisters left, and a number of nephews and nieces who loved her dearly; and as she had the entrée of the best houses in London and Paris, and was, moreover, a tolerably successful authoress,—what cause had she for sadness? She was well off, too—completely her own mistress—and seemed to have better health than usually falls to the lot of a person so deformed and stunted in growth, as she had been from the effects of a fall out of her nurse’s arms when a baby. Some attributed these secret signs of sorrow to hard study and a mind too large and active for her delicate frame, which

Worked the puny body to decay.

And now that I have introduced you to Aunt Mary and her high tower chamber, I will show you, in the course of this story, some passages of the journal she used to write up there.

Do not be afraid of finding love-sick passages or sentimental confessions, for the journal is not about herself. She seldom gave utterance, either by words or writing, to any feelings deeper or more personal than observations on the characters and events which concerned those around her. She revealed her impressions of human nature and the hidden motives that influence mankind—which long habit of thought and deep study had enabled her to fathom. If Aunt Mary had a secret story of her own, it will not be told in this book.

“This is my dissecting-room,” she would sometimes say to the gay and wild Honoria Verdon, the eldest daughter. “Here I take my scalp-knife and lay bare all the diseases which are undermining your constitution. Take care—you are losing some of the fine qualities which nature gave you. There,” she added one morning, “go and practise your singing, and leave me to my cruel employment. I want to write down all those strange things which have occurred during this long summer visit, for I shall leave you all in a week, and if I go

to that romantic old Glenmaurice House on the Scottish borders with an arrear of Dingleford Castle events on my hands, my poor old head will get confused, and I shall be mixing up the events of two such different families together."

"And when will you show me that Glenmaurice House journal?" said Honoria, looking with curiosity at the piles of manuscript on an old bookstand behind Aunt Mary's chair.

"Some day, perhaps, but you will most probably meet the Glenmaurice party in London next season, and I have a presentiment that you will all become very intimate together, and perhaps——"

"Perhaps what?" said Honoria with a slight shudder; "oh, I long often to know what you are thinking of, and what you see when you look out that way into the far, far distance. I am sure you have second sight. I don't believe you belong to this world at all. I think you are a spirit—sometimes like a good angel, and sometimes——"

"Sometimes like an evil spirit?"

"No, not evil quite; but when you speak

so kindly of persons who have sinned or have been very wrong, and you make excuses for them, I fancy you must have committed some such sin yourself, or you would not be able to feel such compassion for them. You never condemn people, or let anybody speak ill of them; you never even find faults in any persons unless they are present. Then you do indeed give one a pretty good set down: how angry you were with me last night when Morgan O'Neil was talking to me in the garden."

"Yes, and with good reason too, for you were purposely disparaging that poor young heiress, Nesta De Lacy."

"Poor young heiress," exclaimed Honoria, with flashing eyes—"poor, indeed, I wish I had one-tenth part of her fortune, and I know what I would do with it."

"Return the broad lands of Dermot and Glenfinlan to the person whose ancestors possessed them before the Conquest. And that is probably what she may also wish to do with them."

"Do you really think Morgan will fall in love with her?" said Honoria, turning pale.

“ I do not say that, but, my dear Honoria, remember that you have no fortune, and that Morgan O’Neil has scarcely a thousand a year ; above all, that he is ambitious, and so are you, too, and you have fostered his ambitious views. You have not exercised the influence you possess over him for the highest and best purposes, and although he loves you deeply——”

“ Yet he will forget me ?” said Honoria, bursting into tears.

“ I do not say that he will forget you. Morgan has many good qualities, and so have you, but neither of you have had the advantage of a really good education. Now, I think it probable, from what I have heard of her mother and her guardian, that Miss De Lacy has been well trained ; but I am not sure that she will be more attractive to Morgan O’Neil for that reason. And you know that my earnest wish is to see your young loves prosper.”

“ Then why do you say that this horrible Miss De Lacy will interfere ? why should she ? I would attend to all you say and strive to fulfil all your wishes. I would be-

come anything as long as Morgan loves me ; but if he should cease to care for me I shall lose all my energy ; I shall have no motive, no power to become better."

" Yes, that is what we all think when our wishes are crossed. But, dear Honoria, you were wrong to tell him that Miss De Lacy was said to be plain and stupid."

" Well, but Evan heard Mrs. O'Flaherty say so."

" Then you ought not to have repeated it ; above all, not to him."

" No ! perhaps because he may be the more captivated by her if he finds she is better looking than he expected."

" That is an obvious reason ; but why can you not have a higher motive ? why will you not endeavour to think no evil ? to acquire real charity of mind ?"

" Ah, how I hate sermons, at least when they are preached against myself, when texts are brought up that I feel must condemn me. Yet I have preached to Morgan ; I have tried to convince him that many things that he thought innocent were quite wrong."

" I know that you might obtain a great

influence over him, and he has a mind and disposition that would be worth much—that it would be most important to influence. He would have the power almost to regenerate Ireland,” said Aunt Mary, as she looked out on the beautiful view which her high window commanded.

“And so he will, I am certain, for your eyes have now that happy prophetic look that I know augurs well. Do you know that you look quite beautiful sometimes?”

“I am afraid it is only that lovely scene that makes me feel happy; for, although I repeat, he has the power, yet he has not the will. He is utterly ignorant of what is right or wrong, and as there seems no one but you, a wild wilful girl of eighteen, to influence him, his prospects of intellectual or moral development are not great.”

“But surely I am improving; I am better than——Look, there is his boat turning the point, there by Nolan’s rocks; see how fast he is rowing. Oh, how delightful it would be to cross over the bay in it this fine day. I am sure you would not dislike the sea, it is so very smooth; and then we might land

at Brandon, and climb the hill and look down upon that dear old ruined castle of Morgan's. You admired that dark glen so much when we saw it last summer at a distance from Carrigtown. And we might call on the new Rector, those people the De Lacys have given the living to. I have heard they are dreadfully High Church, or Low Church, or something very disagreeable."

"Because this same poor heiress, Miss De Lacy, put them there, eh?"

"Why do you always call her poor, when she is the richest person in the county, and, worse still, possesses all those beautiful mountains, and valleys, and old castles that were once the O'Neils', and ought now to belong to Morgan. Look, he sees us; he is waving his hat. Do come, and I'll go and ask mamma to allow little Alice to come with us, for you will like the expedition better if that child is with you."

"But I am not sure that your mamma will like you to make such a long expedition, and although the sea is now smooth, it may be very rough before we can return,

and you know how I dislike it, and what a foolish coward I am."

"Well, if it gets rough we can come back in Dr. Nolan's jaunting-car, round by Dingleford town. So that's settled."

Morgan O'Neil landed at the castle steps a few minutes afterwards, and as he was bounding up the terrace walk that led to the south entrance, he was met by Honoria.

"They are all out; they are gone to hunt at Cochler, and there's nobody at home but mamma, and you need not go in to see her, for she has got one of her bad headaches. But Aunt Mary and little Alice are coming down immediately, and you are to row us over to Brandon. There! why you don't seem half pleased at the idea; you look quite absent—what has happened? You have seen Miss De Lacy," she added, and her dark eyes looked with reproachful scrutiny on his countenance.

"No, I have not seen Miss De Lacy, and if I had, what difference could it make?"

"I hope not, but I often fear it would. Has she arrived yet at Carrigroghan?"

"I have not heard that she has; but really the way you torment me and yourself about that stupid girl is enough to drive me mad. Isn't it, Aunt Mary?" he inquired, as that lady came down the steps accompanied by little Alice.

"I have been scolding her about it, so let us hear no more on the subject."

"But I think we had better give up the expedition," said Honoria, with a pettish look. "I see Morgan does not like the trouble of rowing us over the bay."

"Oh yes he does," said Aunt Mary, with one of her quiet smiles; and taking the young man's arm, she led him down towards the boat. There was a momentary look of anger on Morgan's face, which could only have been seen by Aunt Mary, Honoria and the child being behind them as they descended the narrow steps to the water's edge.

CHAPTER II.

The virgin of Phœbus, to whom the honour
Of an unwedded life was awarded by the golden-haired god.

* * * * *

She, who avoiding marriage, obtained from her sire
The boon of maidenhood.

EURIPIDES.

PERSONS of a "certain age," even when they suffer from uncertain health, often acquire the faculty of enjoying the present moment—of making the most of every passing gleam of sunshine that crosses their path—more thoroughly than the young and healthy. Aunt Mary had cultivated her own natural taste for the beauties of nature and art by all the aids that religion and philosophy can afford, and of the four persons in that little boat which is gliding over the

smooth waters of Dingleford Bay, she is undoubtedly the happiest. There was nothing to disturb her peaceful contemplation of the scenery, for even the voice of little Alice, and her numerous questions about all the glittering stars and plants she saw at the bottom of the clear water; her wonder about the fairy rocks; her wish to know who had lived in those ruined towers that sometimes came in sight as they passed round the various creeks and inlets of the bay, were all in harmony with Aunt Mary's own thoughts, and the pleasant imaginings caused by all she saw.

It was far otherwise with Honoria and Morgan, for they were so absorbed in themselves, or perhaps in each other, as to be almost insensible to all external objects and influences. If the rain had descended in torrents they would scarcely have felt the change, for the kind of words and looks were passing between them which not only dwell for ever in the mind, but often stamp the human soul which has to live through eternity with ineffaceable marks. They were influencing each other, and although

they were lovers, yet there was more tempest and whirlwind, more of the crashing storm which uproots and destroys, visible on their countenances, than of the peace and joy which a holy and true love ought to engender. Perhaps their dispositions were rather too much alike; at least it is dangerous when two impetuously ambitious natures meet, while neither has had the advantage of good training.

Honoria, perhaps, had imbibed less evil than Morgan, but only because the precepts inculcated by the education given to a woman are not so very much at variance with divine commands as those which men receive from their instructors. Yet the grand principle, the teaching which leads to self-knowledge, had, as usual, been entirely neglected: she had never been made to confess, either to herself or others, the errors that her deep feelings and wayward passions produced.

Morgan had received what is called a very good education, although he had lost his parents when a child, for his maternal uncle had sent him to a first-rate public

school, and he had taken a high degree at Cambridge. The same uncle had also contrived to nurse the property, and make it produce a small income by the time Morgan came of age, although debts and incumbrances were said to have completely swallowed up the remnant of the large estate when his father died. This uncle had also given Morgan's only brother an equally good education, and promised to give him a living near his own place in the north of England. But he had not advised Morgan to enter any profession, because he wished that the young man should devote himself entirely to the care and regeneration of his Irish estates. And now his great object was that Morgan should go into Parliament, and he even promised to pay the expenses which must necessarily be incurred at the ensuing election for the county.

Morgan O'Neil had scarcely a thousand a year, and no habitable residence except a little modern cottage, which his uncle had built for him near the old family mansion of Ballydrinnen. Of course it was the pleasant dream of Honoria and Morgan not only to

repair this old mansion, but to restore the ancient castle of Dermot, that pile of ruins which frowned over the dark waters of the river Carrig in the glen of the black rocks. The approach to this castle was through one of those solitary and savage-looking spots which has a most depressing effect on the spirits, where the convulsions of nature seem to have been followed by the turbulent strife of men. There lie the gigantic rocks which have been hurled from the rent mountains by mysterious primeval force, and the fallen arch, the massive walls that had evidently been blown up by the first efforts of murderous gunpowder, project over the lofty rock, and overhang the yawning gulf or the roaring waterfall. Few trees, or even shrubs, or signs of cultivation, are in these dark glens, and I have sometimes fancied that I have heard above the deafening roar of the waterfall that rushes over the riven rocks, the cries of the wounded, the warlike shouts of the victors in the fierce conflict of bygone strife. The turbulent spirits of Ireland's past history seem still to haunt such spots, and the mountain

echoes seem to prolong the strange sounds of defiant mockery and wailing.

Aunt Mary could not help shuddering at the loss of the sunshine as she descended the steep hill which led to this narrow glen ; but the gloom did not seem to be felt by Honoria and Morgan, who were bounding down the steep path, while the rocks echoed with the triumphal sound of their voices. They had reached the bottom of the pass, and began to ascend the rocky height surmounted by the old castle, before Aunt Mary and little Alice had half descended the narrow path which led in zig-zags down the mountain-side. But Honoria was not so absorbed in her gleeful anticipation of restoring the old place as to forget that Aunt Mary and little Alice were toiling down a difficult descent. As soon as she had clambered up to the ruins with Morgan's assistance, she playfully reproached him for deserting Aunt Mary, and the young man rushed half way down the rocky slope, and bounding across the chasm, which was at the spot much about ten feet wide, was able to reach the path on which Aunt Mary was, by a

much shorter cut than if he had gone down by the proper way.

But the moment after he bounded across the chasm a shriek was heard, which did not proceed either from Honoria or the others, and they all looked round with wondering curiosity to ascertain from whom or whence it came.

"It must be the fairies' shriek," said little Alice; "Nurse Flanagan says this glen is haunted, and the fairies——"

"It was certainly a woman's voice," said Morgan, "but Honoria is too well accustomed to these rocky chasms to feel any alarm at my spring."

"Do not attempt it again, however," said Aunt Mary, "for had the stone slipped on which you alighted on this side nothing could have saved you from being hurried down the cataract, for the torrent is too deep, and the current too strong, to allow the best swimmer to stem it."

"I know that well," said Morgan, as he hoisted little Alice up on his shoulder, and giving his arm to Aunt Mary, supported her down to the water's edge. From this point

a winding road led up the only accessible side of the acclivity to the ruins.

"Look," said Aunt Mary, pointing to a sketch-book and parasol at a little distance, "there must be some one in the glen besides ourselves; these are not Honoria's, for she did not bring any, I think."

"Yet few tourists find their way to this remote spot," said Morgan; "and I am sure now, if the good people of Carrigtown ever visit this place——"

"Come up here," cried Honoria; "bring Aunt Mary up to the top of the keep, there is such a lovely view all over the distant plain, and as far as the Sugar-loaf Mountain in the Shievedhue range. She has never been up here before."

Aunt Mary was easily persuaded to venture, for she enjoyed rambling about the extensive pile of ruins, and so, with Morgan's help, she soon stood on the summit of the tower.

"Here we can see," said she, "a little bit of paradise, far, far away. I hope the châtelaine of olden time had her bower up here,

for, unless she could see something beyond this dark ravine, she must have passed a gloomy life."

"And once those lands, that far-off bit of paradise," said Morgan, "and all those still more distant mountains, time out of mind, they belonged to the O'Neils; but now, look—you can just see the end of that long modern house to the left in the distant plain—that is the dwelling of the present possessor."

"Is that Carrigroghan—Miss De Lacy's?" inquired Honoria; "oh, I am so sorry. I had no idea we could see so far from this castle. I was in hopes this old place still looked only on the O'Neils' territory. Morgan, we will not build up this high tower unless—unless——Come down, I hate the view now. Aunt Mary, don't look at it any more." And the impetuous girl ran forward, and never stopped till she reached the torrent which rushed round the base of the rocks on which the castle was built.

"We are to leave the glen by yonder outlet and go as far as Dr. Nolan's house, are

we not?" inquired Aunt Mary, as they followed Honoria down.

"Yes," said Morgan; "and I hope to get the jaunting-car, for you would be tired with such a long walk. Look, Honoria has picked up the strange sketch-book. What beautiful drawings; they must belong to some artist."

"No, I think they are by an amateur," said Aunt Mary, "but they are very well done: this is a good sketch of Sorrento. This is Castel-a-Mare. I see the very house where I lived four years ago."

"It must belong to some traveller," said Morgan, "for certainly there is no one in this neighbourhood who could draw like that: we had better take the book and parasol to Carrigtown, and inquire at the inn. Stay, I hear a footstep under the Mermaid's Rock. I suppose the owner was there when I sprang over the chasm; no wonder she shrieked, for it must have been just over her head, and probably looked formidable enough, for the torrent is much broader at the base and under the Mermaid's Rock than the overhanging cliffs are above, where

I jumped. Come down with me here, Aunt Mary, and I will show you the Mermaid's Cave, and perhaps we may find the owner of this beautiful sketch-book. It is a bad bit to scramble down, but you are such an expert climber, I think you will manage it safely."

"Give me the book," said Honoria, "and take both Aunt Mary's hands, otherwise she will fall down these slippery rocks. I'll take care of Alice."

They heard voices plainly, and as they approached the cave, two ladies emerged from its dark recesses. One of these ladies was young and rather pretty, and as Aunt Mary looked on her fair face and deep blue eyes, she fancied she had seen that pleasant countenance before. The other was tall, and had the large bony features which betrayed a northern or Scotch origin.

The elder bowed to Aunt Mary, and as she advanced towards her, said, "I think I had the pleasure of meeting Miss Bridgeman (Aunt Mary's real name) at Nice, six years ago?"

"Yes, I remember now; I was so puzzled

at first. You are Lady Lawrence; but, surely, this young lady is not your——”

“She is my poor brother’s child. I lost my own daughter, who, you remember, was just her age. Allow me to introduce my niece, Miss De Lacy. We only arrived last night at Carrigroghan, and she would drag me up here to visit this old ruin.”

The party were all regularly introduced to each other, and Lady Lawrence, who had never been in Ireland before, expressed the great pleasure she felt at finding such an agreeable acquaintance in the neighbourhood. She endeavoured to persuade them to come and rest at Carrigroghan, and promised to send them home afterwards in her barouche.

Aunt Mary saw on Honoria’s countenance a strong disinclination to accept the friendly proposal, so she made an excuse, and explained that Mrs. Verdon would be expecting them at home.

“I suppose you are not going to live here much,” said Aunt Mary to Lady Lawrence, “for I hear Miss De Lacy has such a fine place in Yorkshire?”

“Yes, Knutsford Hall is a most beautiful place; but Nesta is so enthusiastic about Ireland, so full of plans to improve the poor people and promote work, and all that kind of thing, that I do not feel as if I should ever get her away from this country; and then she wants to build schools and churches, and to restore all the castles in the neighbourhood—but she must go to London before long, for she is to be presented this next season.”

“And Morgan must go to London, if he is elected, to attend Parliament,” thought Honoria, “and I dare say he will be charmed with that milk-and-water face; such a contrast to mine, he will like the change; and what a timid little fool she must be to have screamed that way; and how she blushed when she was introduced to Morgan. I dare say she has made him in her silly mind into a great hero—a preux chevalier already.”

The two girls did, indeed, form a contrast. Honoria's dark hair partly clustered in strong curls round her snowy neck, and was partly plaited in thick bands that en-

circled her head like a diadem ; and she had those large eyes which sometimes shine forth with the lustrous brilliancy of a star between black clouds on a stormy night—eyes, that either flash with anger, and laugh in rapturous triumph or contempt, but seldom melt into the softer expression of love or tenderness. Her faultless features and glowing colouring, only marred by the somewhat proud curl of her ruby lips—her tall figure and majestic step—all denoted that kind of strong vitality which characterises the old Celtic race in Ireland.

In Nesta De Lacy's fair young face, and loving though somewhat shy blue eyes, the predominating expression was humility and kindness. Her figure was small but beautifully proportioned, and all her movements had the graceful charm which springs chiefly from the harmony of a well-cultivated mind.

Aunt Mary had only been slightly acquainted with Lady Lawrence, for she left Nice very soon after that lady had arrived there ; but she had heard so much in her favour, that she felt very glad to renew the acquaintance, and they sat down together

in the Mermaid's Cave, while the young people wandered about the wild glen.

"I am very glad Nesta has found such pleasant young companions to show her the beauties of this wild place," said Lady Lawrence.

"That is a very beautiful girl, and how handsome Mr. O'Neil is; a worthy representative, he appears, of the old fiery kings of Munster, or all Ireland, were they not? And I suppose these two are engaged to be married?" she added, without waiting for an answer to any of her questions or surmises. "Poor, I suppose, both of them; the Verdons a large family, and father extravagant, and mother a weak person, I believe; so I suppose the children run wild. All the better for Nesta, for I think now she has been brought up too strictly, too much confined to her lessons. I want her to have a great deal of country air and exercise, or she will droop, as my poor girl did. And I won't hear of her marrying till she is of age. An heiress ought never to marry before she is of age; but although I know her cousin, Lord Mowbray, is most deeply attached to her, and would be just the same if she had

not a penny in the world, yet I will have no engagement even. No ; she shall be quite unfettered ; she shall have full time and opportunity to make her choice."

"I hear that Lord Mowbray is one of the most rising men of the day," said Aunt Mary, as soon as a pause allowed her to put in a word.

"Yes, he's a very good man, and I do hope there will be nothing to interfere with his marrying Nesta."

"If that is really your object, are you then quite right in not wishing them to be engaged? Surely it might prove a safeguard: the engagement to a really worthy person might assist her to guard against the numerous aspirants who will endeavour by every means to win her heart. Surely, there will be some danger to such an heiress ; fifty thousand a year, has she not? Much danger," she added, as her watchful eye caught a glimpse of the party as they rambled about among the ruins above, and perceived an expression on Morgan's face when he spoke to the heiress, which she was sure Honoria would not like to see.

“Yes, there is much danger,” said Lady Lawrence; “only I know Nesta loves her cousin; she thinks he is the most agreeable as well as the best of men; she has confessed it to me.”

“Are you not afraid that this very confession may denote that her affections have not as yet been awakened? When such feelings—when true love dawns in a young girl’s heart, she is generally too unconscious of its existence to give utterance to it.”

“Oh, you are a deep reader of human nature, I know. I wish I had your quick insight. I know you have, from your looks. I am only a plain woman with some common sense, and feel I have a most heavy responsibility. I should like to have you at my elbow during the next London season, but I believe you never go there to remain long. I hear of you now and then breakfasting with Rogers or at Sydney Smith’s, and I tell everybody that I want to meet Miss Bridgeman, and they promise that they will endeavour to secure you, and then I find you are gone!”

“Is Lord Mowbray enthusiastic?” in-

quired Aunt Mary. "I mean, does he enter into those schemes you tell me she had for the poor people's amelioration? for I fancy, from what you said of Miss De Lacy, she would be fascinated by that kind of enthusiasm."

"No; I cannot say exactly that he is; but he is what I consider much better than enthusiastic, he is practically good. Mr. O'Neil is going to stand for the county, is he not, and will probably be returned? Ah, I thought so. And the Verdon's do not go to London, I suppose?"

"They have been induced to go there this year, and I have advised them to do so, for many reasons. I think that Miss Verdon's proud and somewhat confident disposition is likely to be improved by the leveling effects of London society. But, unfortunately, Mr. Verdon lives much beyond his means, which is an impediment to the journey; and I fear the poor old place will, in another generation, go quite to ruin. Yet his father left it all quite unencumbered, and the entire castle in perfect re-

pair, except the old haunted wing and high tower where I live."

"And when are that handsome pair to be married? What a splendid figure the girl has. I wish my niece—or no, I suppose she is quite pretty enough for an heiress; if she had such beauty as that girl's, besides all her riches, the world would go mad about her."

"Miss De Lacy will be much admired," said Aunt Mary, "and she deserves to be so, for she is very graceful, and has a loving and most lovely expression; she will, however, be dependent for happiness on those she loves. But what made you think those two are to be married, for they are not yet even positively engaged?"

"One always hears some rumours even before one comes to a place, and though people say I always talk myself, and never listen to anybody else, yet somehow I do contrive to pick up a good deal, and, perhaps, I imagine still more. Of course they—I am certain that beautiful girl loves him, and I think he intends to marry her."

"And I hope he loves her too," said Aunt Mary, "for she has the power to influence his peculiar disposition well; that is, if she can attain sufficient self-control to govern her own unruly mind."

"Is she clever? I mean, is she what is generally called clever, accomplished, and well read, &c.? My niece is not clever; yet she draws, and does some things well; but that girl seems to me full of genius."

"Not exactly; she has power and a strong will, but as yet she has scarcely tried to do anything, and she is not at all accomplished—has no turn for music, or drawing, or learning languages, and has never had any pains taken with her. But I do not mind all that, if her heart is in the right place. But it is all uncertain; I cannot at all prophesy what her future may be. If her fate is adverse—if she should turn out badly—she will do incalculable mischief."

"I suppose so; and even now her eyes are flashing fire: she is jealous of my poor little inoffensive niece——So you are going to call on the new Rector and his wife—

very dear, nice people. That was the happiest hour of Nesta's life last spring when she was able to offer this good living to her dearest friend's father. Eva Dromore is a noble girl, and almost all the good Nesta has learnt has been from her. She will be a most valuable prize. Now, who will she be likely to marry—who is there in this county? Tell me of some very perfect man. Ah, I see you do not know of any: the young Verdons are wild; I suppose take after their father. But I hear the younger Mr. O'Neil is considered a very promising young man; does he ever come here?"

"I have never seen him," said Aunt Mary, "and his brother does not seem to approve of anything he does or says; but that rather induces me to think well of him, for I conclude that he endeavours to tell home truths, and that he has higher and nobler views than the ambitious dreams which haunt poor Morgan's fiery brain. But we ought to proceed homewards, for we have a long distance to go."

The party all got into Lady Lawrence's,

or rather Miss De Lacy's, jaunting-car, which had been waiting at the end of the glen, and drove to Carrigtown Rectory.

"I am afraid Eva will not be at home," said Miss De Lacy to Honoria; "she told me last night she was going up to Glenfinlan to-day."

"Then you have seen her already?" said Honoria.

"Oh yes! we found her at Carrigroghan when we arrived there yesterday; in fact, she and her mother arranged everything there for us, and their dear faces welcomed us at the hall door. You know, Eva is the very oldest and dearest friend I have in the world."

"What, the clergyman's daughter? Oh, then, I suppose she is one of those superior sort of people who always do and say the right thing," said Honoria, with a somewhat contemptuous look.

"She is very beautiful, I have heard," said Morgan, as if he wished to atone for Honoria's disparaging air.

"Why you told me you had heard nothing about them, except that they were

High or Low Church, I forget which," said Honoria.

"She is beautiful, and I am sure you will love her," said Miss De Lacy, turning to Honoria; "she is only too good for this world, so good that Aunt Lawrence sometimes fears she will not live long. You know Aunt Lawrence lost her own daughter," added Miss De Lacy, in a low whisper, "and she was so very good, that when I think of it I sometimes tremble for Eva, although she is really very strong and healthy."

"That is very little encouragement to be good if it makes one die young," said Honoria; "that is why I have hated those good story-books; they make one feel quite afraid of doing right."

"I don't think you need be afraid of being too good," said Aunt Mary.

CHAPTER III.

Moreover, seeing that such things are, beware
Lest thou utter any boastful word against the gods,
Or assume any haughtiness if thou art superior to others
Either in power or in the multitude of riches,
Because a day takes away and restores again
All human affairs. But the gods love
The modest and abominate the wicked.

SOPHOCLES.

“You never told me that you were acquainted with the De Lacys,” said Honoria to Aunt Mary, when they reached home that evening, “and yet you seemed quite intimate with that Lady Lawrence. It is very odd you never said anything about them.”

“I did not know that Lady Lawrence was even related to Miss De Lacy, still less that she was her guardian. It is upwards

of six years since I met Lady Lawrence, and then she had a daughter about the age of Miss De Lacy, and very like her, so that I was quite startled when I saw her to-day; but I scarcely remembered Lady Lawrence: she did not make much impression on me."

"But her daughter did, and you liked and admired her, I am certain, and so you do now that insipid heiress."

"Is she insipid?" inquired Mrs. Verdon, who had been lying on the sofa at the other side of the room, in a kind of half-insensible doze which often succeeded one of her bad headaches.

"Yes, a pink and white young lady, a regular doll's face, with large blue eyes and flaxen curls, a little silly frightened thing, who actually shrieked when Morgan happened to bound across the chasm over her head."

"How could he do that?" inquired Mrs. Verdon, in a languid voice.

"Because she and her old aunt had contrived to poke themselves down under the Mermaid's Rock and into the cave, and how they ever found their way into such a place

without a guide passes my comprehension : so stupid of her."

"Why stupid?" inquired Mrs. Verdon. "Because she found her way? I think she must have been very courageous to venture down into such a place. It makes me quite shudder to think of it, for I could not bear even to look down into that chasm when you lugged me up to see the ruins that day. Well, I suppose we must call on those people; it's a long drive, I am afraid. I suppose it will do if you and Aunt Mary and the boys go."

"Yes, we must make Rory go," said Honoria, as if a bright thought had just struck her. "How nice it would be if——"

"If what?" inquired Mrs. Verdon.

"Well, I was thinking," answered Honoria, with some hesitation—"I was thinking that perhaps it would be a good thing if Rory would take a fancy to Miss De Lacy."

"But I thought you did not like her; you called her stupid and like a doll, and I am sure Rory would not like anything of that kind," said Mrs. Verdon, who, with all her faults, or rather her short-comings, was,

like most Irish mothers of the preceding generation, thoroughly unworldly and uncovetous.

"Oh, but then she is so rich, and Rory is so extravagant, and always wanting money," said Honoria.

"Poor Miss De Lacy," said Aunt Mary, "is she, therefore, to be sacrificed? I expected better than this from you, Honoria. You have shrewdness enough to make you worldly and covetous, and not sufficient nobleness of mind to perceive the flagrant injustice of the wish. You shall confess to me for this in my dissecting-room," she added, on seeing that Honoria appeared sorry for what she had said.

CHAPTER IV.

For the evil-minded, holding some good things in their hands,
Know it not—ere some one has cast it from them.

EURIPIDES.

A FEW days after the expedition to the black glen of Dermot, Aunt Mary left Dingleford Castle. She never remained there except during the summer months. Her winters were generally spent with her own relations near Glenmaurice Hall, but the next season she intended to remain longer in London than usual, because her Irish friends the Verdons were to be there after Easter.

Morgan O'Neil was elected member for the county of — without much trouble or expense, for besides his own family

influence he received the unexpected support of the powerful De Lacy interest.

Honoria had been very anxious that he should succeed, and she intended he should distinguish himself in the House, and become a celebrated and influential character. But now that he had succeeded in the first object, and bid fair to realise all the hopes she had fostered that he would attain celebrity, she was not by any means so well satisfied, nor did she experience the gratification she had anticipated in his triumphs.

. She knew that Miss De Lacy had spent all the winter in London ; she heard that the young heiress was often present with her aunt at the debates in the House. She knew that Morgan was invited everywhere, and, of course, was constantly meeting Miss De Lacy : therefore, she had spent a dull and anxious winter.

Yet Morgan often wrote to her, as he had done before, ever since they were children, and his letters were not less frequent, but no positive engagement had ever yet been made, for her father had declared in his decided and peremptory manner that though

he had no objection to the young O'Neil, yet he would not hear of any engagement till they had both seen more of the world.

"What is the use," said he, "of our going all the way to London and taking a house in Brook-street that is to cost four hundred guineas, unless the girl is to see the world and look about her, and then make up her mind whether she really prefers him to any of the other fellows who I suppose will admire her pretty face."

And so far Aunt Mary had agreed with him.

The Verdens were nearly related to some of the families which at that time were the fashion in London; so when they arrived there they had no great difficulty in obtaining admittance to a few of the best houses. Of course they were not by any means so much sought after as the great heiress of the season, who possessed the additional advantage of a large inherited acquaintance.

Honoria was fully prepared to find that Morgan would have become very intimate with Miss De Lacy, although he had never

mentioned her in his letters ; but she was much surprised to find that when they met he scarcely spoke to her at all, although he sometimes talked with her aunt, Lady Lawrence.

This was an unexpected relief. Yet Honoria was not quite satisfied with his manner to herself. Sometimes he was so absent that he scarcely seemed to hear what she said, and when she reproached him for his inattention, he excused himself by saying that he was much occupied with his business in the House of Commons, or that he was on a Committee, and that he had several matters of great importance to think of.

She knew that all this was true, for every one told her that he entered heart and soul into his duties as a member, that his speeches created quite a sensation, and that he was one of the most rising young men of the day. She also knew that these important employments often prevented him from meeting her at the various parties and balls to which they were invited. Therefore, she endeavoured to be satisfied

progress, or retrogression of feelings in the young people in whose fate she felt so much interest. She became extremely anxious about Nesta De Lacy, as she learnt to know her more thoroughly, and as she saw that the brilliant qualities of Morgan Neil had fired the young girl's imagination and dazzled her judgment; and perhaps this favourable impression was enhanced by his somewhat marked avoidance of her society. When almost every other man in London was making up to her, the strange indifference evinced by Morgan was the more remarkable.

Morgan's behaviour towards Honoria also sometimes perplexed Aunt Mary, nor was she at all satisfied with that young lady's conduct. The love of admiration was leading Honoria to a degree of coquetting which was painful to witness, particularly by a person who, like Aunt Mary, had such a deep knowledge and experience of the small beginning of evil which leads to fatal results. And I will here quote some short passages from the journal she generally kept.

CHAPTER V.

In looking for fortune thou didst study how thou mightst follow
after
And at once attain it; but thou didst not wish to pursue—to attain
virtue.

EURIPIDES.

“ I WISH I had not introduced the Glenmaurices to Honoria, they are becoming too intimate, and the old fool, poor Lord Glenmaurice, is actually falling in love, and making up to her. Yet I am, upon the whole, glad that I persuaded them to come to London. It is good for Mr. Verdon—the check of the world and society may curb that habit of drink which he is falling into. I see it is of some use, and for his father’s sake I am anxious, for I loved him much, and I know that he wished his son—but

I must not think of what never could have been.

“Lord Mowbray is a very good man, in every sense of the word, and he is exactly suited to make Nesta De Lacy happy, and to be of the greatest use in the management of her large property. But I see he cannot influence her; as yet he has not succeeded in exciting, and I fear he never will, the deep feeling which I fancy that Morgan could at any moment awaken in her heart. And that unfortunate meeting with him in the romantic old ruins in the dark glen of Dermot; the knowledge that she possesses the property which belonged to his ancestors, has awakened a deep and wild kind of passion which perhaps otherwise might never have troubled her life. But I believe she is quite unconscious of this. She only is aware that a more intense sort of enthusiastic admiration for poor Ireland, and its interesting people, has sprung up since her visit to her vast estates there, and in the innocence of her heart she attributes it to increased anxiety to be of use to them. She does

reflect, she does try to know herself, poor girl; she possesses much more self-knowledge than Honoria has ever acquired. But if I were to inform her that she loves Morgan, she would be horrified, and declare it to be impossible; and now I see plainly that it will be Honoria's fault if she loses Morgan.

“The girl puzzles me. Is ambition really getting the better of all the good impulses I fancied lay dormant in her heart? Is she really fascinated by the glitter of the world, or is she only provoked because Morgan is naturally much absorbed by his Parliamentary life? Is it a mixture of jealousy, and covetous desire for grandeur and inherited influence, that makes her tolerate, almost encourage, Lord Glenmaurice's advances?

“And how can I expect that Morgan will remain constant to her when he sees that—when he also sees, as plainly as I do, that one look, a word, would give him the heart of that interesting heiress, whom all the men in England are striving to win. It

is a great trial for him, and I admire the way in which he keeps himself quite aloof from Nesta.

* * * * *

" *Tuesday.* I am disgusted with it all, I shall not remain any longer on this disagreeable atmosphere for the sake of trying to influence these foolish young people. I have talked to Honoria, and she cried and declared she shall die if Morgan does not care for her, and I know the better part of her will die, but I begin to fear that he does not, and never will, or can love any woman as he ought. There are very few men, indeed, who are capable of loving a woman as she ought to be loved. The education men receive renders them too selfish, and they can seldom care deeply enough about any one. It ought not to be so. Holy love should be the grand mover, the greatest prompter to all their highest and best endeavours.

" But the education people receive now tends to make women fools, and men sinners! And every generation will, I fear, become worse and worse as we become

farther removed, and more uninfluenced by the real faith in revelation which seems to have existed in what are called the dark ages.

“In these days there is a great deal of levity, but very little fun ; a great deal of dash and splash, and that kind of deceptive movement which is often mistaken for progress, but generally turns out to be retrogression ! a great deal of the bustling spirit which provoked the remark of some clever writer that ‘a vulgar person could never take up a fork, or an affront, without making a noise about it.’

“And what must strike an old person most forcibly is the utter deficiency of mirth and sprightliness (I believe these very words are going out of fashion) in young people, and more especially in those who are called fast. Truly, it may be said that they ‘take their *fastness* (pleasure?) sadly,’ and do impudent things without appearing to derive any enjoyment from them.

“Serious contempt or arrogant self-sufficiency are the prevailing expressions on their faces. How seldom do we now see a

genuine hopeful *smile* light up the features which are surmounted by those boldly re-butting hats, or the over-arching triangle of the unbecoming bonnets ! Serious contempt verging on disbelief—showing the absence of faith in all that is holy, good, or beautiful—the want of hope which must produce discontent—an unamusable discontent—a spirit that only derives gratification from the exercise of contempt, and looks down with heavy seriousness on the faults and follies of others—not the spirit of fun which can often find amusement while it induces forgiveness of them.

* * * * *

“ When friend after friend dies, either to the world or to ourselves, and the society around us is ever changing, we sometimes wonder that the outward appearance of objects in our neighbourhood should still remain the same !

“ I often think how lonely those old mansions must feel in which I have seen so many generations pass away, for their own unchanged appearance gives us an impression of never-ending stability which becomes almost an existence.

“And have not the scenes enacted in their vast saloons and picture-galleries left, as it were, a living impression on their old walls? One clings to the idea; for when so many whom we love have gone away it is pleasant to fancy that their old homes have still a kind of vegetative life, and that they help us to venerate and look kindly upon the memories of their former inhabitants.

* * * * *

“Like pilgrims old and weary, we have
Wandered back once more.

“How well I remember hearing the beautiful authoress of these lines sing the air to which she set them in the days of her early youth. I do not know whether the song was ever published, but some of the touching lines, with the plaintive tones of her voice, often recur to my mind. Some of them ended with the sad, but often true refrain,

But we do not even feel as we did then.

And it is this change in ourselves and in others which often embitters a meeting with old friends after a long interval. They have sometimes gone far in one direction; they have become either worse or better, while

we have become quite the reverse in another direction.

“ Few things bring more disappointment to persons who have warm hearts and vivid memories than the meeting with old friends of our youth and childhood after a long period has elapsed without our having either seen them or known the various and often hidden influences which work such strange changes in character—when we do not even know the persons under whose influence these old friends have passed—or who or what may have become their world since we met!

“ And there are few things more melancholy than the changes in our own social world—the passing away of those who constitute the world to us.

* * * *

“ And now that I have given vent to my ill humour, I will pack up my journal, and not open it any more till I get home to my own little den at Glenmaurice Lodge.”

* * * *

A fortnight afterwards, at Glenmaurice, Aunt Mary wrote :

“ *June 12.*—I was a fool to leave London

and abandon them all to their fate. I feel now that perhaps I might have prevented it, and that it was cowardly of me to desert my post after being the means of bringing them to London, but I know I never do right—never. Cousin Susan is afraid her papa has proposed to Honoria. I dare say he has, the old fool; but what right had that perverse girl to encourage him? I suppose, to show Morgan that she had refused a rich Earl for his sake.

* * * * *

“I am quite miserable about them all. What is the use of my not being young and pretty, of my being exempt from the passions and anxieties of youth, if I suffer so much from the troubles of others?”

CHAPTER VI.

In dishonourable designs there is no hope
Which may supply confidence.

SOPHOCLES.

He is not a lover who does not love for ever.

EURIPIDES.

“I HAVE no dress to wear this evening at D—— House, and it will be the best ball we have had the whole season. Oh, mamma; what am I to do? I shall really not be fit to be seen!”

“How you startle me, dear Honoria; I wish you would not bounce into the room and disturb me so, when you know how dead tired I am, and just getting a little doze over my book; never slept at all, and was not in bed till four o’clock. How you

can stand all these late hours, and dancing incessantly till four or five in the morning, I can't imagine."

"I am not in the least tired, except from being obliged to wear the same ugly dresses over and over again, and papa was so angry at Madame Delphin's last bill, that I don't know what to do; really, a hundred pounds goes no way at all. I am sure I don't know how Morgan and I are ever to live on nine hundred a year; we shall actually starve."

"Then, why do you wish to marry him? I am sure there are plenty of gentlemen with good fortunes who admire you; and *I* never had such a very high opinion of Morgan as you and your father and everybody seems to have; I think his brother is worth a dozen of him."

"His brother! What, that pale-faced, doleful clergyman, that always seems to be looking reproachfully at me. He always makes me feel as if I were doing wrong, although he never utters a word of blame. The way he looks at me if I say anything thoughtless or at all silly, is enough to take

one's breath away. But never mind that now; just look here at this dress; you see the flounces are quite tumbled."

"So they are, indeed; cannot Florentine iron them? But I shall never be able to go to a ball again to-night—quite impossible; so if you are determined to go, you had better send off and get a chaperone."

"Ah, there's the difficulty. I was afraid you might not, 'so I asked Lady Gordon, but they are not invited: the Duke has left them out: it is to be so very select."

"Why not write to Lady Lawrence? she is sure to be going."

"Yes; but I don't like her, so I suppose I must put up with that old dowager, Lady Glenmaurice. But Morgan will think that so odd, as he knows I have refused her brother-in-law. It is a pity, though, for she is very fond of me, and does just as I like at a ball."

"I should not think Morgan would mind; he can't expect you to quarrel with all the family."

"Perhaps not; but would not people—would not Lord Glenmaurice himself think odd?" thought Honoria, who, with all

her apparent thoughtlessness, was more worldly-wise than her poor invalid mother. "Well, I suppose there is no help for it, and it's just as well to keep friends with him too," thought Honoria, as she sat down to write the note.

* * * * *

"Just as well to keep friends with him," repeated the young beauty, as she entered the ball-room with Lady Glenmaurice, followed by her rejected suitor, that night at D—— House.

Honoria was the beauty of the season: she had just the kind of strikingly handsome face and figure most likely to produce a rapid impression and make a sensation in a ball-room; and the incense of the admiration—the homage of a hundred admirers—was enough to heighten the brilliancy of her dazzling eyes, and the triumphant fascination of her smiles.

And was not Morgan O'Neil proud to be the object of this fashionable beauty's preference? Probably he was; but he did not evince so much gratification as Honoria seemed to expect. Instead of hastening to

bespeak her at the beginning of the evening, he allowed her to accept a dozen of the young men who pressed forward to secure her for the waltz ; so it was with a kind of haughty condescension that she accepted him for the tenth waltz, and the next moment she had the triumphant gratification of being carried off before his eyes to the head of the principal quadrille by the young Marquis of Dumbleton, the greatest parti of the season.

“Who is that beautiful girl with Miss De Lacy?” inquired her partner, as they took their places opposite a German prince and their host’s sister.

“What beautiful girl? Where is she?”

“Quite new—never saw her till this evening ; but she has already produced quite a sensation in the entrance-room and all the way up the staircase. Prince Gerthaler and the foreigners are raving about her, for she is fair, and has the golden hair they admire so much.”

“Who can it be? Not Lady Julia Simpson? I don’t know who else is likely to be with Nesta De Lacy.”

"Oh no! Lady Julia is almost plain and stout, and this girl has the walk and air that ought to belong to an empress, with a face that Raphael should have had as a model, and then we need not have been reduced to admire that coarse-looking Fornarina."

"Why didn't you ask her name?"

"I did, but was none the wiser when I was told it by that mumbling old poet, and I could not get near Lady Lawrence for the crowd, but it sounded something like Eva Drummond; but I thought you would know all about her as you know the little De Lacy so well: she is a neighbour of yours in Ireland, is she not?"

"Eva Drummond—could it be Eva Drummore that Nesta had actually brought to such a ball as this—a common clergyman's daughter?" thought Honoria.

"Has she dark eyes, with long lashes, and eyebrows darker than her hair, and with the expression of one of those saints you see in some of the old pictures?"

"Exactly."

"Then it must be the parson's daughter

from Carrigtown. Miss De Lacy gave them the living, but how she ever ventured to—how she succeeded in getting her an invitation for this ball, when I hear the Duke has refused to invite several old acquaintances of his own, and even some of his relations are left out, passes my comprehension.”

“He seems to know her well, however. Look there, she is leaning on our host’s revered arm, and he is actually introducing her himself to the great Lady J——.”

“Yes, that is actually Eva Dromore.”

“What a pretty name! She really is lovely; but you must mistake, she cannot be a poor parson’s daughter. Why, she does not seem even surprised at the admiration, nor does she appear to think it at all strange that every one is looking and wondering about her.”

“She is completely ignorant of the world, and knows no difference between this party and a village fête. I do not think she has ever been at a ball in her life, or has even learnt to dance!”

Honorina was right in her surmises. Eva

never had been at a ball, nor had she been taught to dance, except by her mother; but she was endowed with the rare quality of natural grace. She came to the ball merely because it was Nesta's wish. She had come to London for a week with her father, who was obliged to visit England on law business. They were staying in Nesta's house, and it so happened that the Duke of D—— had met them at dinner there the day before, and had been so much pleased with the fair girl that he had, unasked, invited her to his ball. And he was now enjoying what to him was no small delight—he was hearing her fresh remarks, drawing forth her opinions, and exerting those powers of producing agreeability which no one possessed in a greater degree than himself. Then he said to her:

“Will you not like to dance? I see at least twenty young men who would be enchanted to initiate you into the mysteries of the quadrille or waltz.”

“I would rather look at the dancing than join in it: there is so much to see, and then the beautiful pictures in the other room

which we passed! Besides, I have never danced except with the children on birthdays, but I like it very much, particularly the old minuet de la cour."

"Ah, that beautiful dance, with its calm dignity and majestic step! I fear its solemn tones were the knell of departing grace—the last plaintive dirge of old régimes and of expiring nobility. We will have a minuet in the small dancing-room; I should like to see you dance it. But I don't know who would be your partner. I believe the young Lord Dumbleton is the best dancer going. Here, Marquis, let me introduce Miss Dromore; can you help us to get up a minuet de la cour?"

"I should be enchanted to dance one with Miss Dromore if we could find two others."

The arrival of a royal prince distracted the Duke's attention, and Eva was left with the young Marquis.

"I suppose the Duke was only joking," she said, "for I should certainly not like to dance a minuet here."

"But you will be persuaded, I hope, to dance a quadrille or a waltz with me?"

"I would rather not, for I am so much amused; it is all so very beautiful that I am enjoying it thoroughly; and I have not seen half the pictures yet."

"Rather not dance because you are so much amused! you have discovered quite a new mode of enjoying a ball."

"No, she has only arrived at the same conclusion that all you blasé youths and old people like me have done," said the cynical Mr. Praid.

"Oh, there is Nesta," exclaimed Eva; "I am so glad!" and with beaming looks and light graceful steps, she traversed the broad expanse of boards which in that well-arranged house was always left open for the dancers.

"Did you ever see such a majestic step? she ought to be a queen; but what a courageous girl!" said Lord Dumbleton.

"No, only ignorant," said Honoria, who came up at that moment, and overheard the Marquis's observation.

“Yes, too ignorant and unsophisticated to discern the merits of all these young elder brothers,” said Mr. Praid, “and so she has deserted them, and walked off to her old friend to enjoy the ball in her own way.”

Honorina felt that Eva was exciting more admiration than had ever fallen to her own share, at this the most brilliant and select ball she had yet seen; and she could not help feeling provoked that a country girl, of no family or pretension, should have caused such a sensation in the highest set of fashionable life.

“You are quite absent this evening,” said the cynical Mr. Praid. “I believe you are reflecting how becoming those blue corn-flowers are in her beautiful hair; and at this present moment I believe you would willingly exchange your raven tresses and starlike eyes for her reposeful face and golden hair.”

“Whose golden hair?—what do you mean?” said Honorina, with flashing eyes, as she saw that Morgan was standing near Miss De Lacy and talking to Eva. He was whispering to her, she was convinced, and

then she saw that Eva accepted his arm and they walked away, and disappeared through the door leading to the conservatory.

"That's a cool thing your cousin is doing," said Honoria's partner, "carrying off the new beauty—determined to have her all to himself. Is not Mr. O'Neil your cousin?"

"No; but we were always very intimate, quite like brother and sister ever since I was a child."

"A very rising young man: should not be surprised if he became Chancellor of the Exchequer; that is, if he can marry a rich heiress, which I suppose he will do if yonder new beauty does not put all ambitious dreams out of his head."

"Why did he take her into the conservatory?" was a question which tormented Honoria all through the waltz, which seemed as if it would never end; and what provoked her more was, that she saw the keen eyes of the cynical Mr. Praid watching her with a mischievous look. But as soon as the waltz was ended, he came up and gravely offered his arm, and said, "You

will have time to go there, Miss Verdon, before the next dance."

"Go where?"

"Wherever you like; I thought you seemed hot, and wished for some cool air in the conservatory."

"Yes, I am hot, indeed; this room is quite suffocating."

But it was not easy to penetrate through the crowd, so that it was some minutes before they reached that part of the room where Lady Lawrence and her niece were sitting, which was on their way to the conservatory. But neither Eva nor Morgan had returned.

"So you brought Eva here," said Honoria, as they were unwillingly arrested by the crowd who were always hovering about near Miss De Lacy.

"Yes; I am so glad she came with us, and she enjoys it. Mr. O'Neil is showing her all over the house. You know the Duke happened to dine with us yesterday, and he took such a fancy to Eva, and made her sing after every one else had gone."

"I did not even know she was in town. I wonder you did not——"

Here Honoria stopped suddenly, for she saw by the curl on Mr. Praid's lips that he divined all she was about to say, and that he saw she was annoyed at not being asked to meet the Duke.

"I was just going to send and ask you to let us bring her to your party next Friday, when I found she and her father will be obliged to leave town that very day."

"Oh, I am so sorry," said Honoria, while her yet unschooled countenance expressed the reverse; then turning to Lady Lawrence, she said, "I am so oppressed with the heat of this ball-room. It would be very kind if you would take me into the conservatory, and then Mr. Praid would be set at liberty."

"You wish to get rid of Paul Pry," said he, in a low tone; "but you may trust me in this case, for I am interested by you; it is your only redeeming point," he added, in a voice no one could hear except Honoria. "So come on——"

“What redeeming point?—what interest can you see in me or feel about me?”

“The pleasure of finding one genuine bit of real, of disinterested feeling, evinced by the few who, like yourself, have a heart that can love. But believe me, this love is not so strong as when you first came here two months ago; you are often thinking of many drawbacks, of the small means you will have: you feel that his one thousand a year will not suffice to procure things you covet now, but never thought of before.”

“How can you know?—why do you imagine such things?”

“Because I have little else to do; I am a useless spendthrift in fortune and almost in mind, too old to mend, yet I still retain my admiration for all true feeling.”

By this time they had succeeded in reaching the conservatory.

“They are not here! where can they be?”

“Has he ever evinced any admiration for her before? They must often have met in Ireland.”

“I never observed it.”

"Nor for the heiress, her friend?"

"Ah, that may be the cause; she may be talking to him about Nesta; but I really do not think Mr. O'Neil cares for her."

"He is ambitious, as you are. I fear you are both too ambitious to be satisfied with *mere* happiness; neither of you will be content to settle down on the little remnant of his old family property; I am afraid not—much afraid."

"I often fear that *he* will not," said Honoria, "particularly since he has succeeded so well in Parliament."

"Yet it was your wish that he should come into it; but your partners will all be exasperated at being deprived of their dances, so I will take you back to the ball-room, and then return here and search in the picture-galleries for that beautiful Eva; she interests me even more than you do. I must discover whether she has any secret history—I think she has, and that it prospers—fortunate girl, and who is the happy man? I envy no one in the world so much. By-the-by, did not I see you come here with the Glenmaurices—what was your motive?"

Ah, I see that you and that handsome O'Neil are both determined to have many strings to your bows! and I am afraid you will lose what you both of you once wished, and what I still think would be best for you both—each other.”

“So Aunt Mary always said. You know Aunt Mary? She said that I am the only person who could ever influence him, and that I——”

“That he would be *well* influenced by you? did she quite think that?”

“That no one else could, was her opinion.”

“I believe so too, and I have often believed in her second sight, and I fancy that you will both exercise a considerable influence over each other's fate—but perhaps separately. And here is Noel Clifford coming to claim you for the waltz—I see it in his face. I will continue the search for the new beauty and her admirer, and I will tell you candidly whatever I discover.”

“That would really be kind,” said Honoria, as she accompanied her partner to the waltz.

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Mr. Praid proceeded to the upper room, and through the long picture-gallery, without discovering the objects of his search; but found himself near Miss De Lacy, who was returning from the dance with Lord Dumbleton.

“What has become of Lord Mowbray? I don’t see him to-night.”

“He is gone to his place in Yorkshire,” said Miss De Lacy, with heightened colour in her usually pale cheeks; “his steward was taken suddenly ill.”

“She does not like me to imagine she is engaged to him,” thought Mr. Praid.

“I believe you and I are looking for the same persons, and there they are. I wished to enjoy the sight of your new beauty; you must introduce me to her while she is here, for I never saw any one who interested me so much; and how happy she looks.”

Mr. Praid then talked to Eva for some minutes, and contrived, at the same time, to watch the countenance of Miss De Lacy while Mr. O’Neil was speaking to her aunt and to several other persons who were around. But Morgan did not even address

her, although she must have overheard all he said to the others.

“ So Aunt Mary is gone,” said Mr. Praid to Eva Dromore. “ I suppose you saw a great deal of her in Ireland. I am very sorry she is gone—left us all to our fate in the very middle of the season—gone from the midst of a society in which she is fully appreciated—where she is sought for—loved by the good and the great—gone to a country neighbourhood where the people are only capable of comprehending that she is a woman with two eyes and a nose, that’s all. Or, perhaps, still worse, they remember that she is an old maid, without even a house of her own.”

“ You are severe on country neighbourhoods; while I have always been told that people are much less worldly in the country than they are in London.”

“ No; in some respects there is more worldliness in country neighbourhoods than in London. In the country you are too often valued for what you *have*, while in the great society of London you are generally valued for what you *are*, ‘seyen wolte

er—nicht haben,' said, I think, Schiller, and I also would rather *be* than *have*."

"I dare say that is all very true; but I should prefer the country; I would rather have the delicious smell of flowers and the song of birds. They always are in harmony with whatever state of mind we may be in."

At this moment Lady Lawrence went down stairs, and Mr. Praid proceeded to seek Honoria among the dispersing waltzers.

"Well, what did you discover?" said she, as he appeared.

"Nothing very remarkable; but I was confirmed in one of my surmises."

"And that was—what? Do tell me," said Honoria, with an anxious look.

"That the heiress will never marry any one else—she will die an old maid unless—you know what I mean."

"You are right; I am afraid so; and he sees it plainly. It is a great trial."

"Very great; probably more than he can bear, unless you help him by the most judicious treatment, and by showing the best of yourself—by becoming better, by helping to ennoble him. Otherwise, he will fall into

the great temptation. Fifty thousand a year, a pretty adoring wife, and the restoration of the ancient O'Neil territory—it is a sore trial.”

“ But he does not care for Eva ?”

“ No ; I wish he could. I wish he had the power to appreciate such goodness, for it is her goodness, say what you will, that gives her such transcendent charms. We all feel it—all the sinners—the old and young sinners who are here to-night, all feel that they are in the presence of a superior being ; one who lives up to the precepts of the religion which many of us profess to believe. Such an ovation as we have all given her to-night is an example of the one, the only, redeeming point in all the vice and folly of London society—that it can, that it does, occasionally discriminate real worth. I wish, indeed, the O'Neil had the highly cultivated feeling to fall in love with her, there would then be more hope for politics, for the country's good. Oh, you may shake your head contemptuously at my opinion, but I maintain it is her *goodness* that attracts us all.”

CHAPTER VII.

Contemtuons pride engenders the tyrant ;
Pride, if inflated by a superabundance of vain wishes,
Which are neither seasonable nor expedient,
Surmounts the highest summit of the steepest rocks,
And then rushes forward into ruin,
Where the foot can find no resting-place.

SOPHOCLES.

“ It will be more than he can bear unless I help him,” were the sad words that haunted Honoria’s pillow that night, the principal impression that she had brought away from the ball. And they recurred to her the next day, although she almost tried to forget them. “ To become better, indeed ? how can I do that ? That is so like what Aunt Mary would say. I wonder why Mr. Praid and Aunt Mary never married, they think

so much alike on some points ;” and, amused at the idea, she bounded down stairs to breakfast, glad to seize on anything that would tend to distract her mind from the vague anxiety, the unwonted feeling of responsibility excited by those haunting words.

“ Why, you look as fresh as a rose, my dear Honoria,” said her father, who had only got half way through his breakfast. “ There’s no fear of your ever getting tired at balls. That’s all from having been brought up among our mountain breezes. I said so to Lord Lumsden, when he complained that his daughters were beginning to look like stale fish when they got up in the morning after balls. And where’s Morgan? I thought he was coming to breakfast this morning; haven’t quarrelled yet, eh? — not cut him for any of those lords, me girl, have ye?”

Mr. Verdon was shrewd enough in his judgment when his mind was unclouded by his unfortunate habit of intemperance, and he had the remains of a noble and truthful nature, or rather the ruins of it, I should

say, and although he had uttered no word of blame, yet he did not altogether approve of Honoria's "flirting with all those young lords, for with all their riches and titles many of them were not fit to wipe the dust off the O'Neil's shoes," and now he feared that the blush on Honoria's face showed that she was guilty of flirting with somebody last night.

"I know you're not engaged to Morgan, because I thought it wasn't fair by either till you had both seen more of the world, but I don't think with all your dancing and flirting either of ye have seen any one you'd like better than yer two selves. And so yer mother thinks, too. As for old Lord Glenmaurice, I'd sooner see——"

"What could I have done more than refuse him?" said Honoria, resentfully.

"Not have flirted with him, and then you'd never have had to refuse him, me girl. And now, I believe, you're drawing on that young Marquis of Dumbleton, and he is perhaps the best of the lot; but I'd sooner see ye marry the man you love, and live in his tumble-down old castle, than behold ye

in a palace with a coronet round yer brows, even if it were of strawberry leaves."

"So would I," said Honoria, who was always influenced by her father when she could look up to him, and she had always admired his true nobleness. "But," she added, relapsing into the vague misgiving she had lately indulged—"but I am not so sure that Morgan would like the old tumble-down castle so well as the fine palace at Carrigroghan and Knutsford Hall—Nesta De Lacy's place in Yorkshire."

"Well, and if I warn't sure o' that, he'd have no daughter o' mine, I can tell him," said Mr. Verdon, bringing down his hand on the table with a bang that almost sent the eggs out of their cups. "And yer wrong to say so, for I have never seen him make up to her at all; but why don't he come—here's ten minutes to eleven, and he said he'd be here at ten. I am sure you did something to offend him last night, now."

"Not that I know of; I could only dance one waltz, because he didn't choose to ask me till I was in sixteen deep, and then—and then——"

"Then what?" said her father, looking straight into her eyes with a searching glance.

"And then he asked me late, and I was tired, but I fancied that he looked as if he would rather talk to Nesta, who was close to us—at least, I caught a look of his to her. I felt provoked, so I wouldn't dance, for I wanted to see and hear what she would say—because I think she saw the look, and I know Morgan did not mean me to see it."

"And so you refused to dance with him, and then accepted another partner—that's the plain truth, wasn't it?"

"Well, I didn't mean to do so at the time, but I thought Morgan had gone away, for we were separated by the crowd, and the Duke came and said he wanted to make up a Polonaise, and Lord Dumbleton insisted on my dancing it with him."

"And Morgan saw that ye accepted some one else after refusing him," said Mr. Verdon; "why, you silly girl, that's quite enough to make him jilt you, even if you were ever so much engaged to him."

"No; because I thought he was gone, and

he talked to me soon afterwards, and he did not seem to have minded it."

"Didn't seem to mind it; the boy is too proud to show his feelings in a ball-room. I engage to say he felt it deeply, and that's why he don't come, and many a long day may pass before we see the light o' his countenance again. My poor child, you have done very wrong."

Honorina burst into tears, for she was moved at her father's genuine sorrow, more than she would have been had he evinced the anger she expected he would show.

"May God forgive you, for I see you are playing him false, and you'll have to suffer bitterly for this. There, don't cry, girl; I'll go and call on him, and see how he has taken it. Go up and tell it all to your mother."

CHAPTER VIII.

No mortal man is entirely fortunate :
When wealth flows in one man may be more prosperous
Than another, but entirely happy he cannot be.

EURIPIDES.

MR. VERDON went immediately into the hall, and putting on his hat with a determined air, but much on one side, and with that peculiar jaunty sort of look which characterised the Irish gentleman of the last century, walked down towards Pall Mall.

He was well known, and very popular among a certain political set, and even at that early hour of the morning he met several acquaintances, so that it was some time before he could escape from the gossiping

greeting of his numerous friends, and was able to reach Pall Mall. One of them gave an account of the ball the night before, and told him that his daughter had met with an unexpected rival beauty.

“ Oh yes, they are right enough, for she is a beauty indeed ; and I often said to Honoria, ‘ If that girl, Eva Dromore, should appear at the same balls, she’ll take the bread out o’ yer mouth.’ Indeed, then, I did. I’m very glad she has been seen, and I hope she enjoyed herself, for she’s a very good girl ;” and he added in his own mind, “ and I hope she will marry the man she loves, and not go and quarrel and jilt him like that foolish Honoria.”

“ Is Mr. O’Neil at home? I want to see him particularly,” he inquired of the strange servant who answered the door. The servant went up-stairs, and soon after came down again and said that Mr. O’Neil was not at home.

“ Are you sure, now? Here, take up this card to him and say it’s me, and that I must see him for a few minutes.” The

servant took it and proceeded a few steps along the passage, but immediately returned and said it would be no use to take up the card, as his master was out.

Mr. Verdon shrewdly suspected that he was not, but would not see him. For a few seconds he debated in his mind whether he would go up-stairs and insist on seeing him. But his pride was hurt, and I am afraid that the result of the contest assumed some such words as these: "No, I'll be hanged if I force myself or my girl upon him, if he don't choose to see me." So, with a true Irish toss of the head, which made his hat sit still more on one side, he turned from the door and walked towards his club.

But the "still small voice," which often sounds even in our worst moments—that faint echo of the words we have heard, of that "spirit of charity that is kind, and hopeth all things"—the gentle voice we disregard, and our refusal to hear which, often changes the whole tenor of our characters, and influences the fate of our whole lives, and those of others too—this gentle guar-

dian sound molested him all the way as he walked along Pall Mall. But it was gradually silenced by the repetition of such thoughts as these: "No, indeed, the proud boy shall go his own way, and me girl shall not give up all the honours and luxuries that are thrown at her feet for his sake." And for the first time a vision of his daughter with a marchioness's coronet round her beautiful brow dazzled his sight. "It would be a good thing for the youngsters too, and the little girl. Mamma's a bad chaperone to get them on in life. 'Twould pay off debts—bad business that last mortgage—when I die, they'll be all badly off."

"Are you going to cut me this morning?" said the very person whose known admiration for the reigning beauty had given rise to Mr. Verdon's unwontedly ambitious vision. He was so startled at being thus accosted by the Marquis of Dumbleton—the very person he was thinking of—that it made him feel quite embarrassed and half guilty.

"I beg pardon; I didn't see you."

"I believe you would have been run over if I hadn't aroused you from such a brown

study," said Lord Dumbleton; "conning over a bet for the Derby, eh?"

"No, I was—I was—thinking of—of Honoria," said Mr. Verdon, whose artless nature was totally incapable of concealing his thoughts, or of finding a ready excuse for his preoccupation.

"Well, I do not wonder at that," said Lord Dumbleton, with a smile, "for certainly she is the most pleasing object one's thoughts could possibly dwell on. I hope she is coming to L—— House to-night?"

"I believe so; but I'm such a bad hand at evening parties, and I never know where she is going."

"You are all coming to dine with me on the 23rd; I hope you will remember that engagement. Ah, you had forgotten, I see; and here is another of the guests I hope to have. You know Mr. Praid, I think?"

"Oh yes, and knew his father too—old college friend—don't often meet, for I don't belong to his learned set of wits; hear of you, though, from Honoria; very sharp on her sometimes, she tells me."

"Your daughter interests me, and I ad-

mire her wondrous beauty ; I shall be very glad to meet you both at Dumbleton House."

" I suppose you are on your way to Mrs. Gordon's ?" said the Marquis to Mr. Praid.

" I have half a mind to go ; I like the witty set she contrives to bring together, only it's such a bore going in the morning."

" You had better come ; it will do you good. You'll have a chance of learning something."

" Which I never did at the university, you mean," said the good-humoured Marquis, who had been plucked at Oxford. " Well, I think I shall come, for once."

" I like that man," said Lord Dumbleton, as they left Mr. Verdon at the door of his club, " and it was so amusing to see that he had forgotten he was to dine with me on the 23rd ; yet he's fond of a good dinner, too."

" Yes ; and you don't often find papas so forgetful when you invite them to your house, I should think."

" No, indeed," said Lord Dumbleton, with a half sigh ; " and the numbers of notes I get, all asking one to such millions of parties,

and the '*wait for answers*,' sometimes drive me almost mad."

"I hope you'll marry before the end of the season, otherwise I foresee you will get into difficulty; and in spite of all the riches and ready money you came into last year, you will soon be half ruined."

"Well, really, I don't know; I dare say I shall; I can't say. I like that girl, that beauty, but I believe it is because she has no mother or aunt—I mean, her mother don't care, which makes me like her so much—that's why I asked them all to dinner. But my aunt wants me to marry Cousin Di. I wonder whether Di would—and like me for myself?"

"I am sure you couldn't do better."

"Well, I'll think about it—no hurry," said Lord Dumbleton, gravely. "I know you are a wise man, and not easily taken in. I am not a wise man, and I get so tired of being taken in."

CHAPTER IX.

Remain still and listen; for neither formerly didst thou hear my
words

In vain, nor do I think that thou wilt do so now.

SOPHOCLES.

THAT afternoon's post brought a letter from Aunt Mary, which touched Honoria deeply. It seemed to lay bare the strange feelings and vague conflicting longings which were hidden in her heart. She could not avoid seeing, she could not deny, the truth of all that Aunt Mary said, and the chief impression left on her mind accorded with Mr. Praid's oracular words, "Unless you help him, the trial will be more than he can bear."

Mr. Vernon had not yet returned home after Honoria had read the letter, and her anxiety to hear the result of his interview with Morgan increased; she would not go out lest she should miss him, and she tried in vain to fix her attention to any of her usual occupations. Her impatience became so great that every sound in the street made her run anxiously to the window. But the long hours passed, and she began to think the day would never end. She was doomed to endure the suspense still longer. For Mr. Verdon had found an old friend at his club, who persuaded him to ride down with him to his villa at Putney, and dine there.

His anger against Morgan in some measure cooled down, and his having met Lord Dumbleton just at the very moment when he was thinking that he might be an advantageous husband for Honoria, had made him feel as if he were guilty of match-making—a crime most repugnant to his straightforward ideas and maxims. So he was in no hurry to see Honoria, for he scarcely knew what to tell her.

“Better let circumstances decide,” thought

he, "for I'll be hanged if I know what is best for the girl; she will meet Lord Dumbleton to-night, and probably Morgan, and I won't say anything to bias her one way or the other;" so he dined with his agreeable friend, who was much delighted with his Irish stories and his jovial temper, and then he went home late, with no very clear impression on his mind about anything. His absence at the dinner-hour did not excite any surprise at his house in Brook-street, for he often dined at his club without returning home to dress. So Honoria was obliged to go and dress for the great party at H—— House without hearing the result of his visit to Morgan O'Neil. But she thought much less than usual about her toilet, and surprised her maid, Mademoiselle Florentine, by her indifference as to what wreath or dress she should wear.

"It does not signify; any will do."

For once she was not thinking of the conquests she was to make: since her grand success at the first London ball, her thoughts, both before and during her toilet, were chiefly occupied in revolving the

different wreaths and dresses in her mind, and as time went on she began to remember with triumphant exultation that Lord Dumbleton admired her most in the roses, the Duke of D—— in the lilies, and so on, until each flower was stamped with a mark of conquest in her eyes. To-night she was thinking of the man who had loved her before her thoughts were ever turned to dress, from the time she wore little white frocks—the man who, she was fully aware, only saw herself, and admired her in any attire, however homely or unadorned. She always looked well in his eyes. She remembered endless scenes of bygone happy days, roaming with him in ruined castles, when sunny dreams of love, and hope, and joy made beautiful nature still more beautiful.

“No, take away the wreaths, I won’t wear any to-night,” she said, in a desponding voice to Mademoiselle Florentine, for they were all associated in her mind with the sinful gratification of vanity, caused by the admiration of her different partners; and the flattering words they had uttered

recurred to her without producing the gratification she had hitherto felt in remembering them.

"Mais Mademoiselle s'habille comme si elle allait au couvent—elle va se faire sœur de charité?" said Florentine, in surprise. "C'est que tout lui sied bien—elle est parée de sa beauté et de ses 18 ans;" and the maid sighed as she caught a glimpse of her own faded face in the glass above Honoria's radiant countenance.

"Et la robe de crêpe blanche sans fleurs et sans garniture?"

"Yes, but I will wear this real camellia," said Honoria, taking one out of the flower-stand near, as she remembered hearing Morgan once say that he hated artificial flowers.

"C'est bien." Mademoiselle Florentine had quite taste enough to see that Honoria never looked better.

Mrs. Verdon accompanied her daughter that night, as it was not to be a late party.

The crowd, however, was great, and they had some difficulty in getting through it. Honoria was impatient, and began to regret

that her mother had come, as she was, in consequence, less free than usual, being obliged to take care that Mrs. Verdon did not fatigue herself.

At last, Honoria contrived to find a seat for her mother in the first room.

"You will be cooler here," she then said, "therefore I will return here after I have spoken to Lady Lawrence, for I see her and Nesta in the next room, but will not drag you through the crowd."

She hoped, or rather feared, that Morgan might be somewhere in the neighbourhood of Miss De Lacy, and with considerable difficulty she contrived to squeeze through the doorway, and reached the party. But he was nowhere visible. She talked to Nesta and Lady Lawrence for some time, and asked why she had not brought Eva.

"She would not come—she is better engaged at home," said Lady Lawrence, with a somewhat mysterious smile.

Honoria longed to inquire what her engagement was, but could not venture. Could it in any way relate to Morgan?

"What has become of Mr. O'Neil?" in-

quired Mr. Surtees, who came up at that moment.

"I don't know; I thought he would have been here by this time," said Lady Lawrence.

"What a very agreeable man he is; but one is always sure to meet pleasant people at your dinners."

"Then Morgan had dined with them, and was now remaining there with Eva," thought Honoria, in an agony of jealous fear. "Oh yes, Aunt Mary is right; I do most certainly love him," she thought.

So absorbed was she in her tumultuous thoughts that she scarcely heard the gentle voice of Lord Dumbleton, who came up to her at that moment, and with a warm shake of the hand said:

"I hope you do not forget that you are engaged to dine with me on the twenty-third. I saw Mr. Verdon this morning, and he had forgotten all about it."

But Honoria had not forgotten it, and exulted with a wild kind of delight in reading the expression of admiration with which

he regarded her. So she willingly accepted his offer to escort her into the beautiful conservatory and illuminated gardens, which likened the parties at H—— House to some fairy scene of enchantment.

“She is much handsomer than Cousin Di. I wish she would care for me as much,” thought Lord Dumbleton, as they walked through the gardens; and he showed her the cool grottos, and sparkling fountains, and dimly-illuminated groves, and all the remarkable lions of that wondrous villa which she had not before seen.

“I am going to make up a party to a villa of mine, called Ogres Wood; a sort of pic-nic, only just a few, and I wish you——”

“Oh! there’s Morgan at last,” exclaimed Honoria, as turning into a more illuminated walk they came suddenly close to him.

Honoria half disengaged her arm from Lord Dumbleton as she put out her hand to Morgan. Morgan took it in his for a moment, but its cold touch went like ice to her heart. He looked ill and pale too, and

had that absent air which of late was often seen, and there was a dark lowering cloud on his brow.

"I wish you would take me to mamma ; I promised her not to remain very long ;" and with an embarrassed bow to Lord Dumbleton, she put her arm within Morgan's, and almost forcibly drew him away.

"You are angry with me, I see. I was very foolish last night, I know, but I was provoked at your indifference—not asking me to dance, and then going off with Eva for ever so long ; and to-night Nesta let out that you had been dining with them, and were still remaining in her house with Eva. What could I think of all this ?"

"What folly ! why, I thought you knew that my brother Henry and she were lovers, and now they are engaged to be married. It was only quite settled this morning, and so I agreed to dine there, and meet her father and all of them. But I am sure you could not have been jealous of Eva ?"

"No, not exactly, but I fancied she was talking to you about Nesta, because, you remember, I was always so afraid of——"

"Of my being dazzled by the charms of her riches. Well, if this were the case, you surely have no reason to accuse me of endeavouring in any way to win her. Have I not avoided even speaking to her during the whole season, whereas you, on the contrary, have done your best to attract all the men who are considered the best *partis* of the day, and now you are determined to bring that silly Lord Dumbleton at your feet."

"But will you not forgive me?"

"I have nothing to forgive: you preferred dancing with Lord Dumbleton, and you were quite welcome to do so."

"Oh, do not say that," said Honoria, bursting into tears.

"Pray don't make a scene; every one will remark you here," answered Morgan, as they approached the more crowded part of the broad walk.

"Then let me go into the more retired parts of the gardens."

"Yes, you have learnt the way from Lord Dumbleton."

"I really don't care for him; I really

thought you had left D—— House last night when I agreed to dance with him.”

“No, but you do for his title. I believe we shall never suit; perhaps we both wish for grandeur and power. Aunt Mary used to say that we are both too ambitious.”

“And you would like——”

“I do not deny that—but, Honoria, I love you, and I shall never love again if you prove false; I shall become a hater of women, and give myself up to fame. Now listen, if during the next week I see that you continue to draw that young fool of a Marquis or any of them into your train, I will then not claim the promise I have for so long anxiously waited.”

They parted better friends than they had been for a long time.

CHAPTER X.

Many are the calamities to many mortals,
And their forms vary. But one continual form
Of prosperity is scarcely ever to be found by any one in the lives
of men.

EURIPIDES.

THERE had been many witnesses to the strange scene at Lord H——'s villa, when Honoria suddenly deserted Lord Dumbleton in the sun-dial walk, and some of the loungers and amusement and scandal-seeking persons around gave utterance to their surprise in such terms as these: "That's cool, is it not?" said little Jack Surtees to an idle young man who stood near: "that young upstart Irish member has actually carried off the reigning beauty from the richest marquis in England."

"What do you mean by upstart?" said

had been thoroughly roused, but it was chiefly against Honoria. For he had just begun to think that she might be induced to care for him "for himself," when she suddenly gave such decided proof either of her partiality for another or of her utter indifference to himself. He was piqued—his pride was hurt—and, unused to any contradiction or obstacle to his wishes, he for the first time made an energetic resolve. "She shall care for me," he repeated to himself, as he drank off another glass of champagne.

Jack Surtees was clever enough to succeed in worming out Lord Dumbleton's real feelings about the beauty, and then administered the best consolation he could think of. "Why don't you make up a party for her as you did for that Madame Beaujeaulois or the little Leontine: why not ask her to join that exclusive and *recherché* kind of thing."

"I was just going to propose it when that confounded man appeared."

"Write to her the first thing to-morrow morning."

Lord Dumbleton went home in better

spirits, and according to Mr. Surtees's advice, wrote the note before he retired to rest. But he could not succeed in making it express all he wished to say, so he tore it up, and resolved to call on the Verdon's early next morning.

Lord Dumbleton dreamt of Honoria that night, and it was one of those pleasant dreams in which we sometimes feel happier than we ever do in our waking hours—when all is harmony, and every one looks kindly upon us. Yet these delusive visions are not always the work of guardian spirits, although they sometimes leave a feeling of happiness on our mind which lasts all through the day, and are ever pleasant afterwards to look back upon. All seemed easy to the young man when he awoke the next morning, and his firm conviction was that he was now deeply in love with Honoria. So he walked off to Brook-street as soon as he had finished his breakfast, and knocked at Mr. Verdon's door.

"Sure, then, they're not at home," said the Irish footman at Mr. Verdon's house, in

answer to Lord Dumbleton's inquiry at his door.

"Is Miss Verdon really gone out?"

"Sure and she is, yer honour; she's gone to the dancing 'cademy with Miss Alice."

"And Mrs. Verdon?"

"Och, then, she's not——"

"Mrs. Verdon is not down yet, my lord," said the butler, Mr. Snooks, coming forward and elbowing away the Irish footman, who was not to be trusted to speak to the "quality," and only allowed to answer the door at hours when they were not likely to call.

"Then I must write that confounded note after all," thought Lord Dumbleton, as he reluctantly turned from the door and went to his club.

CHAPTER XI.

* . * . * . Oh vain mortals,
Ye who stretch the bow thus beyond the mark,
And then justly suffer many ills,
Ye will not be persuaded by friends, but by circumstances.
And ye cities, which have the power to turn away evils by reason,
Bring affairs to an issue by carnage, and not by reasoning settle
them.

EURIPIDES.

HONORIA had happy dreams that night, too, but it is doubtful whether her visions were the promptings of a good spirit any more than those of Lord Dumbleton. It was rather that her mind in sleep gave more free play to the bias which she had long allowed her wishes to take. She dreamt of Morgan, but fancied that he was offering her a marquis's coronet; and instead of his little house in Ireland, she fancied he pos-

sessed a splendid place in Yorkshire, and she was in a room in which were collected luxurious furniture, and jewels, and vases, and all the objects she often coveted, and the room looked out upon a broad expanse of park scenery, and, what was better still, she felt it all belonged to her. Unlike Lord Dumbleton's dream, the happy impression it produced on her mind at the moment, did not remain afterwards when she awoke. On the contrary, she felt depressed, and thought her little room had never seemed so gloomy, or formed such a contrast to the splendour she had seen in her dream.

Some words dropped by Morgan recurred painfully to her mind: "I doubt whether we are suited to each other; we are both too ambitious."

She did not expect to see him that day, because he had told her that he was to be on a committee; but he was to try and get tickets for the next night to hear the debates, and would come and tell the result the following morning.

Soon after Honoria returned from the dancing academy, Lord Dumbleton's note

was brought to her by Mr. Snooks himself, with the intelligence that the "Marquis of Dumbleton's servant was waiting for her answer." The worthy Mr. Snooks, who had a great admiration for lords, testified his respect for the Marquis by bowing to the note, as well as to his young lady (the possible future Marchioness), and although he was too respectful to wait while she read it, as poor Irish Pat would probably have done, he noticed the heightened colour which mounted to her cheek as she broke the seal, and detailed his own comments thereon to Mrs. Rasper the housekeeper, and Florentine the maid.

Her cheeks glowed still more, and her eyes triumphantly flashed, as she proceeded to read the note; she summed up the result of her cogitations on the important missive with the distinct thought, "He is really going to propose. . . . Well, but I can't help that, and I only accept a common invitation, and surely there cannot be any harm in that. It will be so pleasant. That villa is so lovely—quite fairyland. He is sure to collect all the best singers; it will be

such enjoyment to be among the oaks and flowers. It is only quite a small party, and so *very* select ; why, Lady Julia Grant and Miss Grahame, and all those people, would give their eyes to have such an expedition made up for them ; and so would his cousin, too, Lady Di."

Morgan had stipulated that he would give her a week's trial. "And this expedition will not take place till after the week is over," thought she, by one of those mental quibbles which ruin many originally good resolutions. "It is not to be till the twentieth, only he must have the answer at once."

So Honoria sat down, and with trembling hands opened her blotting-book and wrote the note. She penned it in haste, lest some interruption might occur, or that little Alice might come in and discover to whom she was writing, and then tell Morgan in the kind of thoughtless manner in which children repeat awkward facts. It was soon finished ; and taking an envelope out of the stand, she pressed the note quickly down between the leaves of the blotting-book, directed and put it safely in the cover,


rang the bell, and delivered it to the obsequious Snooks. She saw him go down stairs with it, and heard the hall door shut, and then running to the window, she saw the groom on one of Lord Dumbleton's horses cross over the street, turning the note in his hands.

“ I wish he would not hold it out in that kind of foolish way; if Morgan passed him he might recognise my handwriting,” thought Honoria, who experienced a sort of vague uneasiness for some time afterwards. But she was engaged to an afternoon party, and then had promised to go to the Opera with Lady Glenmaurice, and these amusements helped to distract her mind, and quiet in some degree the vague misgiving which still haunted that region of the mind or heart which we call conscience.

CHAPTER XII.

It is not possible to escape notice, unless God
Be willing to favour our escape.
Whatever, oh wretched mistress, awaits thee
To suffer in thy soul? If we wish
To do some evil to our neighbours, we shall ourselves
Suffer, even as it is just.

EURIPIDES.

MORGAN O'NEIL had promised to call early the next morning, and to inform Honoria whether his application for the tickets was successful or not. So she listened anxiously for his well-known knock at the door. At last she  heard it, and she felt glad that little Alice was in the room, for, strange to say, she rather dreaded seeing him alone.

He ran up-stairs and opened the drawing-room door, without being announced as

usual, but she saw there was an expression on his countenance which made her shrink from the searching look of his speaking eyes.

“What is this I hear about Lord Dumbleton making up a party for you to his villa at Ogres Wood?” inquired Morgan; “surely, after your promise to me the other night, that you would not in any way encourage him, I cannot believe you would accept such an invitation as that; and which seems to me quite equivalent to an offer of his hand.”

Honorina saw by his severe countenance that he was not in the humour to be trifled with, and that if he thought she really had accepted the invitation, he would be lost to her for ever.

What could she do? What many a woman does who knows not what to say—she burst into tears.

Her sobs were so violent that they would not allow her to speak. He was silent also; and when after a few moments she ventured to look up, she saw that he was still unmoved.

“It is so wrong of you to suspect me; so

very unkind of you," she burst forth, and continued alternately to sob violently, and reproach him bitterly.

"Have you, or have you not, accepted the invitation?" he inquired, as soon as there was any pause. "Answer that plain question."

Honorina remembered that no one could prove that she had actually accepted Lord Dumbleton's invitation, for she had taken the precaution not to tell her mother, and had carefully concealed Lord Dumbleton's note, lest any unpleasantness should arise from its discovery; "No one but Lord Dumbleton himself can prove anything, and I can easily explain to him the state of the case," thought she.

Again she concealed her face with her handkerchief while making these reflections, for she could not stand the searching expression of his eyes.

"Why will you not answer? You say nothing, and you will not even allow me to read the truth in your eyes."

"Oh no! What folly this is," said Honorina, looking up with the false bravery

which is the first fatal step to deceit. "Oh no, of course I am not going to Lord Dumbleton's party at Ogres Wood! Certainly not."

"Then you have not accepted his invitation?"

"No, certainly not."

"She has always been truthful," thought Morgan, somewhat reassured. "Then you repeat that you have not accepted the invitation, and do not intend to go there? Look at me again, now, and answer."

Honorina looked up, summoned up all her courage, looked full at him with effrontery, and said proudly, "No, I have not; I do not intend to go there."

"Then I will believe you," he said, in a softened tone. Honorina saw that she was safe. "But if I find that you have deceived me," he added—"if you attempt to deceive me in any way, we part for ever."

Then, looking at his watch, he said he must hasten to the appointment he had on business, but he would call in the afternoon and let her know about the places, if she still wanted to hear the debates that night.

For that he had been so astounded at the news which he had heard about the party of Lord Dumbleton's, that he had as yet done nothing about them.

As soon as he left the room, she sank down in a chair, and cried bitterly for some time; she was at last interrupted by little Alice, who had left the room when she saw that Morgan was angry with her sister, but now returned to remind her that it was past one o'clock, and that she had promised to take her to see the pictures at the Bridgewater Gallery. So she roused herself, and went up to put on her bonnet, and they drove off to Lady Glenmaurice's, who was to chaperone them to the picture-gallery.

They met many acquaintances there, and amongst others, Jack Surtees, who told them he was going to have some amateur music that afternoon, and begged them to come.

"Your great admirer, Lord Dumbleton, will be there too," said the little man. "I did not know that the beautiful singer, Mr. Roland, was coming till this morning, and it was then too late to send out any invitations, so I came here in hope of picking up

some agreeable people. Do come, and I am sure the little girl would like to hear the music. It is no party."

Lady Glenmaurice expressed her willingness to accept his pleasant invitation, and hoped Honoria would accompany her.

"Just the thing," said the little man, rubbing his hands with glee. "Lord Dumbleton will be so pleased; just what he wanted."

"Have you asked Mr. O'Neil?" inquired Honoria, who dreaded lest by any chance he should discover that she had gone there after hearing that Lord Dumbleton was expected.

"No, I am very sorry, but I seldom see him, and I heard that he was so much occupied with important matters, that I was afraid he could not find time to attend an afternoon party."

"Oh yes, that is true; he is always busy; he certainly could not come," said Honoria, with a satisfied air.

It was a very select little party, and there was some excellent amateur music. Mr. Surtees, at his pretty little house in Park-lane, seldom gave any parties, but they were very *recherchés* whenever he did so,

and he generally contrived to have some amateurs who would scarcely sing anywhere, and certainly not at a large party. Lord Dumbleton came soon after they arrived, and appeared much pleased at finding Honoria, and he also talked to little Alice, for he was very fond of children.

Honoria remembered with sudden dismay that Alice would be sure to let it out to Morgan, and she had heard Mr. Surtees tell her that Lord Dumbleton was to be here; it was then past six o'clock, and he was to come back between four and five. She reflected, then, that it was perhaps better to remain now, for if she went back and found Morgan there, Alice would be more likely to tell all about it than if she did not see him till the morrow.

So they remained till all the company were gone, and then Honoria would look at the pictures and Etruscan vases, until she thought Morgan must certainly have gone, because he was engaged to dine at Kensington; and it was likely he did not wait long when he found she was out, but most probably left a message about the places.

CHAPTER XIII.

Simple is the word of truth,
And just things do not need cunning explanations.
For truth has in itself opportuneness. But the unjust word,
Being unsound in itself, has need of artful medicaments.

EURIPIDES.

WHEN Morgan O'Neil returned to Brook-street that afternoon and found that no one was at home, he went up to the drawing-room, intending to wait there a few minutes, in hope that Honoria might return before he would be obliged to leave the house to fulfil the engagement he had at five o'clock. But as the time passed and she did not come, he sat down to write a note, in order to explain about the tickets. He was obliged to hunt through the blotting-book several times

before he could find a bit of note-paper. It was a large book filled with white blotting-paper, and he saw Honoria's signatures almost legibly on some of the sheets, and was amused at seeing the various notes she had written. At last he came to one sheet which produced a marvellous effect on his countenance; his brows knit, a pale livid hue overspread his face. For some moments he seemed almost paralysed; his head sank down on the table, and his hands grasped the rich masses of his heavy black curls with a convulsive clutch which bespeak that mental agony that in old times found vent in tearing out the hair. But he did not proceed to this extremity. With a contemptuous shake of the head he rose from the chair, and by a strong effort, in which pride was the mainspring, his countenance expressed the stern, hard composure of a fixed resolve.

There was a knock at the street door. It was probably Honoria. He turned to the writing-table again, carefully tore out one of the leaves from the blotting-book, and placed it in his pocket. He heard the car-

riage drive off from the door, but no one came into the room.

After waiting a few moments, he seized his hat and rushed down stairs. "It is better so," he muttered; "I can't see her yet."

"Any message for Miss Verdon?" inquired Mr. Snooks, who was almost startled out of his usual solemn propriety by the sight of Mr. O'Neil's cadaverous face and stern look.

"No."

CHAPTER XIV.

If any one endure misfortune which is not caused by his own baseness

It is well, for this is the only real advantage to those who die;
But thou wilt allow that misfortunes caused by baseness can bring
no good fame.

ÆSCHYLUS.

WHEN Honoria returned home purposely late that afternoon, she immediately inquired what message Mr. O'Neil had left.

"'Deed, then, he left none at all," said Patrick; for it was later than the usual visiting hours, and Mr. Snooks was gone to dress for dinner.

"No message? Then he left a note, I suppose, or he saw mamma?"

"He did not, nor did he get a sight o' the missus, for she never came down to-day at all."

"When did he call?"

“It was going on for four o’clock, I think, by the same token muffins was going by at the time; and when Mr. Snooks told him that Miss was out, he said he’d go up and wait in the drawing-room, and Mr. Snooks he showed him up.”

“Did he wait long there?”

“Going on for twenty minutes, I suppose, ’cause I heard the tea-bell ring, and was just going to the hall as he came down stairs, and he did not look pleased; least-ways so Mr. Snooks told Mrs. Rasper, for I didn’t see him close—that he was angry because——”

At this moment Mr. Snooks appeared. Honoria repeated her inquiry, whether he was sure Mr. O’Neil had left no message.

“No, Miss; for I asked him whether there was any message, and he said ‘No.’”

“What can this mean?” thought Honoria, as she ran up-stairs, in hopes that after all, perhaps, her mother had seen him, and might clear up the mystery.

But Mrs. Verdon had heard nothing about Morgan having been there at all. Her head had been so bad, she begged not to be

disturbed. "Perhaps he may have left a note in the drawing-room," thought Honoria; and she ran down with eager haste, looked on all the tables, and shook out the blotting-book, thinking he might in his hurry have left it between the leaves. But only one blank half-sheet of blotting-paper fell out.

"Could he have heard I went to Mr. Surtees's to meet Lord Dumbleton?" she thought; "but that was impossible, for Lord Dumbleton did not come to Mr. Surtees's till past four." Dinner was announced, but Honoria could eat nothing; her father dined at his club. If Morgan had succeeded in getting the places, she was to have gone to the House of Commons that night.

She determined to write a note to him, but there would be no use in sending it to his lodgings that evening, as he would not return home; he was sure to be at the House, for it was to be a late sitting, and it would be probably the most interesting debate of the session.

During the whole evening, she continued to hope he might come; yet the hours passed—eleven and twelve struck—and in

despair she went to bed. She tossed about during a sleepless night, which seemed as if it never would end.

As soon as Florentine came into her room in the morning, she inquired whether the note which she had given the butler the night before had been sent to Mr. O'Neil? She answered that Monsieur Patrick was just gone out with it.

Honorina had expressed in the note her surprise and the extreme disappointment she felt, and she told him how she waited at home all the evening in hopes he would come or send some message. As she lay awake at night, she regretted that she had not said more, and expressed still deeper sorrow; and now that the note was gone, she longed to recal it.

"He gets up early, however," she remembered, "therefore it was better that it should go soon, otherwise he might have gone out to breakfast."

"*Mademoiselle est toute pâle; vraiment elle ne se porte pas bien,*" said Florentine.

"I am very ill indeed; tell papa I cannot come down to breakfast; but bring me

up the answer to that note as soon as ever it comes."

* * * * *

"My lady have had one quarrel I afraid," said Florentine to Mr. Snooks, when she went down. "She quarrel with the beau Monsieur O."

"Likely enough, but you cannot expect such a real beauty as Miss Verdon to put up with a Mr. O anything," said Mr. Snooks, who had lived in several peers' houses, and had the greatest veneration for rank. "I think she had a haught to be a marchioness at least."

"Ah, but, Mr. Snooks, de heart, you know—de affair of de heart, she love that Monsieur O. I know she do: she quite ill now wid de anxiety. I am desolated to see her."

"Ah, that's all very well, but love won't last, and it won't build up his tumble-down house in Ireland."

"But he so clevier; they say he like to be Lord Mayor for England."

"Lord Mayor! bless the woman! Lord Chancellor, you mean."

"Yes; de head of—dere is her bell:

pauvre demoiselle," said Florentine, as she went up-stairs. "Bah! ces domestiques Anglais n'ont point de cœur."

Honoria had only rung for her to inquire whether Patrick had not yet returned.

"Pas encore—c'est loin d'ici à Pall Mall."

"I will dress now, then, and go down stairs," said Honoria, who was feverish with restless anxiety. "Has papa breakfasted yet?"

"Oui, il a fini—et il vient de sortir."

Honoria now regretted that she had not seen her father, as she might have asked him to inquire at O'Neil's lodgings, and ascertain why he never appeared last night. Angry with herself and all the world, she went down to the solitary-looking drawing-room. When out of spirits there is something peculiarly depressing in a hired-for-the-season London house, which, however well furnished, has never a home or friendly look. Honoria had often felt this, for, as she had not cultivated music or drawing, and did not much care to read, the few hours she passed there between her engagements were often very dull, and she suffered from ennui.

“Ennui”—this much-tolerated condition. This word, which seems to express in modern days some kind of excuse or reason for unhappiness, must be derived from the Greek *ἀνοια*, i.e. *without mind*. Yet this expression, without mind, would shock most of those who now experience the sensation of ennui! Nevertheless, it is a most true description of their state. It is from a loss (often, I hope, only temporary) of those powers of mind which we all possess, or from a foolish and sinfully indolent shrinking from the work which it is our duty to find for ourselves. No artists or labourers—few persons who have any positive daily business to perform—ever suffer from this ennui or want of mind, while they are occupied with, or exercising themselves in, their work.

At last Snooks came up to say that the servant had come back with the message that there was no answer.

“No answer?” inquired Honoria of the butler. “Who took the note? I think Florentine said it was Patrick. Send him up. I’ll question him myself.”

Snooks obeyed, although his pride was

rather hurt at Miss Verdon's wishing to speak to an inferior servant in preference to himself.

"Was Mr. O'Neil at home?"

"Sure and he was, Miss; leastways so the servant says when he took it up to him, and he come down after a few minutes, and says he, 'There's no answer.' Then says I, 'Sure Mr. O'Neil has got some message for the young lady?' 'No,' says he; 'all master said,' says he, 'Tell Miss Verdon there is no answer.' So never a know could I know what to do next; so I up and walks home with myself."

The weary hours passed still more heavily as the day advanced. Honoria wandered from room to room and up and down stairs, scarcely knowing what she did.

"Surely he would call—he must call after sending no answer," she thought.

It was a dull, rainy day, so she stood at the window and watched the drops as they chased each other like tears down the window-panes, and the roll of the carriages as they drove along in the wet streets had a provokingly monotonous sound. Of course she would not go out, for she would not

give up the hope that he would call. Late in the afternoon there was a knock at the door. "That was not Morgan's; it is too loud," she thought; but it seemed as if the sound smote upon her heart.

A step on the stair made her tremble from head to foot.

The door burst open, and Morgan O'Neil stood before her.

A mist seemed to pass before her eyes, and her ears rang with the loud knell which sometimes in the crisis of our fate drowns all other sounds, and heralds the downfall of our hopes or the death of a loved friend.

"You have deceived me," were the first distinct words she heard—"you have deceived me, and we must part."

What could he mean? Could Lord Dumbleton have shown him her note?—"What have I done—what can induce you to say this?"

"I thought you truthful; I imagined that the girl I have trusted and loved from early childhood would not stoop to deceive the old friend of her youth, the man who was toiling for power and fame in order to

place her on the height to which her ambitious wishes aspired."

"How have I deceived you?" said she, almost ready to sink into the earth.

"You declared—you repeated again and again—that you had not accepted Lord Dumbleton's invitation. Now, see here," and seizing her arm, he led her to the window, and held up before her eyes to the light a sheet of white blotting-paper, on which she saw with horror and dismay the plain impression of the note she had written to Lord Dumbleton, accepting with great pleasure his invitation. It was all most provokingly distinct, for she had written it with great haste, in order to avoid any interruption which might have led to a discovery, and in her hurry to place it with all speed into the envelope she had pressed the blotting-paper down while the ink was still quite wet. Yes, there could be no doubt: there it was in her own peculiar handwriting, beginning, "Dear Lord Dumbleton," and signed with her own name, and the date at the end.

CHAPTER XV.

Oh that fortune would assist me
In preserving that all-hallowed purity of every word
And action, concerning which, laws are marked out
By angelic footsteps, in the celestial firmament
Engendered ; laws of which Olympus
Is sole father, nor did the perishing
Nature of mortal man produce them, nor
Indeed can oblivion ever lull them to sleep.
Great is the divine immortality of these laws,
And never can they grow old.

SOPHOCLES.

THE town - house of the De Lacys was one of those ancient mansions built by some grandee of a past century, in a garden sloping down to the Thames. These venerable structures of picturesque old London are fast disappearing under the dispensation of modern improvements or innovations, and their old terraced gardens are turned

into dark narrow streets, or still more dingy footways. Nesta De Lacy had inherited this residence from her mother, who was the last Baron De Lacy's only child. The heiress retained a vivid recollection of her mother, and a veneration for all that was connected with her name, although she died when Nesta was twelve years old ; and her death had left an impression of deep melancholy on her child's character, from which she had never entirely recovered.

Her boudoir still contained all the same furniture and other objects which had adorned it in Lady De Lacy's time. It was a pleasant room, and all the more cheerful from being unencumbered by the heavy modern imitations of antique splendour which often darken the small and narrow-windowed rooms of modern London in these days, when we take the beautiful carved oak cabinets and furniture which decorated the large light galleries and broad bay - windowed rooms of old days, and squeeze them into little nutshells of twelve feet square.

The white and gold panels of its wains-

coted walls were hung with pictures of every variety of size and merit, which indicates that they were preserved more for the recollection of country-houses and scenes, or for the sake of persons who either painted them, or as portraits of the loved ones whom they represented, rather than from possessing any intrinsic value as works of art. Nesta De Lacy was sitting at her easel, finishing a likeness of Eva, who was to leave London the following day. Eva's face was turned to the window which looked on the terraced garden sloping down to the river; and Nesta had begged her not to move whilst the finishing touches were put to the eyes; therefore, she did not see that Nesta was impeded by the tears that stood on her long eyelashes. The little heiress was thinking how lonely she should feel on the morrow when her friend should have left her; and that made her reflect how lonely she had felt almost ever since her mother died. The large palatial dwellings where she lived with only her aunt and an occasional visitor, had a depressing effect on her naturally sensitive disposition.

Constant appeals to her sympathy, and

constant calls for assistance from various persons and charitable institutions, had tended to diminish the small amount of buoyancy which a naturally delicate constitution had been able to bequeath. Every case of distress was brought to her by her aunt, who was scrupulously conscientious, but did not see that the delicate child required all the bracing and enlivenment of mind and body which could be procured, to counteract the depressing responsibility of her position.

She had no companion of her own age to live in the house, and the delight she felt during Eva's transient visits tended still more to impress her with the solitary grandeur of her home.

Lady Lawrence thought it right to keep up all the state and dignity of the old family, even when they were alone: so the grave seneschals and grooms of the chamber—the powdered footmen waiting at their solitary meals, which, like state ceremonies, were solemnised in the large dining-room, kept up the feeling of restraint.

Eva had often been struck with Nesta's air of depression, and her chief object had

always been to endeavour to amuse and enliven her friend. In so doing, she had always returned home with the wondering impression of how much happier she was in her little home.

“You are suffering,” said Eva, when she turned round for a moment to see how Nesta progressed with the painting. “You have become so pale lately, that I am afraid the hot ball-rooms and late hours do not agree with you. Yet I had hoped the amusement—the change from the solitary life you have hitherto led—the meeting with some congenial society, might have done you good. But it has had quite a contrary effect.”

“Yes, for it makes me feel more solitary, it forces on me the conviction that I am different from others, that there is some deficiency in me which prevents my being so much amused with all that is called gaiety. I cannot bring myself to enjoy it as I ought. It is really ungrateful. Perhaps I expected too much, but life does not seem to me the happy state I used sometimes to fancy it might have been. All this must be wrong

when I have every blessing this world can afford."

"It is not wrong—not your fault, dearest Nesta; but the principal cause of your solitary feeling is that you long to find some one person who can quite understand you and enter into your views, and you are afraid that Lord Mowbray does not quite do this."

"He is very, very kind, and I feel so ungrateful not to be able to—to—I don't know exactly what, but I dread more and more the end of the season, when he is to ask me——"

"I know, I see it all, dearest Nesta. It pains you not to feel as deep an affection for him as he experiences for you."

"Yes, it breaks my heart, for Aunt Lawrence says dearest mamma wished for this marriage, and I know nobody is so good—no one would help me so well to bear the responsibilities of my position."

"That I fully believe," said Eva; "and remember, there is no hurry; Lord Mowbray could be easily persuaded to wait for a year or two before he even asks you to think of it."

"I know that; but it is not fair by him, when he has already waited so many years, and would never allow himself to think of any one else. Besides, as auntie says, our means of usefulness would be then so boundless when two such large properties become united."

"And your responsibilities proportionately increased. You must have time to reflect; but at present, dearest Nesta, for the sake of your health, you must try to postpone all these anxieties, and take advantage of the distractions and amusements—try to enjoy the beautiful music you often hear—the pleasant breakfasts and garden parties, and for a time discard altogether the future. God will direct you better than any of us are able to do. God has not given you all this solely for the good of others; you must not allow the weight of riches to crush out all buoyancy, and deprive you of happiness."

"Yet Scripture says it is hard for the rich to be saved. It is so difficult to help half the people who fancy one can do everything for them, even if one tries ever so

much. I have always seen that. However much we give away and subscribe to institutions, there are so many cases of distress that we cannot relieve—that no fortune, not even twenty times as much as I shall have, could help.”

“Yet how very many you have made happy; remember all the people at Knutsford, and the poor Irish at Carrigtown.”

“That is true; but you do not see all the letters, all the appeals to one’s feelings. I know I am ungrateful not to be satisfied; I ought to rejoice to make so many happy; but I cannot help feeling depressed at seeing the multitudes for whom we can do nothing. I should so like to have some one to help me to bear it, who would perfectly sympathise with me. There, I think I have finished the picture now. I had no idea I should have done it before Henry O’Neil came. What can have made him so late, I wonder?”

“He was to visit the family solicitor with his brother, and he has probably taken him off somewhere else. You know, Henry is very anxious about Morgan.

"In what way—how? Does he think Miss Verdon is giving him cause for jealousy or annoyance?"

"Not so much that; but he fears Morgan is absorbed in ambition—that his fine intellect and powerful mind is leading him astray; that he is not religious. He will not see or believe that without faith——But what is the matter? You are so very pale; this room is too hot; the smell of the oil paints is oppressing you."

"Oh no, go on; tell me what his brother says of him. I want so to know."

"That he has no faith in Revelation; that he is entirely absorbed in the pursuit of this world's honours and rewards, and that even if Honoria's affection should remain unchanged, she has not sufficiently good principles herself to influence him well."

"I was afraid of it—and that Miss Verdon does not assist, that she rather impedes, his progress in the right direction."

"It is so; but at the same time Henry says very few women could suit Morgan so well; no one woman would really suit him, unless she had a most powerful, energetic mind."

"No, I suppose not," said Nesta, with a sigh.

"Oh, dear Nesta, I am sometimes so afraid—I could not mention it before, but—but now I am going far away, I must give utterance to my fears."

Nesta hid her face in her hands, and burst into tears.

"It is so very, very foolish. I know what you are going to say; it is quite wrong, for he is scarcely civil, and yet now and then he looks at me as if—but I know it is so sinful."

"You are dazzled by his brilliant qualities and handsome person; every one says that he is most fascinating; I can quite understand, quite excuse it. Only pray, pray fight against this feeling; try to amuse yourself in every possible way, and if—if it would help to save you from this evil, do accept Lord Mowbray."

"Then you are sure it would be wrong, even if Miss Verdon should refuse him?"

"Yes, I am certain, because he is utterly without any religious principle. You would be miserable; your sensitive feelings would be constantly hurt. You know that Henry

has had more opportunity of knowing his brother than any one else has. Even Aunt Mary is almost deceived by him, Henry thinks. His only redeeming point, his only unworldly feeling, is his affection for Honoria."

"But what a sad fate for him if she proves false, and it is evident that she flirts with many men; and Mr. Surtees says that he thinks she would accept Lord Dumbleton if he proposed to her."

"It is a sad fate, but you must not be sacrificed to lighten the weight of his misfortune."

"Does Henry think so too?"

"He does, indeed, for we have talked of it several times, and foreseen what might perhaps possibly happen to Honoria."

At this moment the servant came to announce that Mr. O'Neil and Mr. Henry O'Neil were in the picture-gallery.

"Oh, what shall I do? Do I look as if I had been crying? Go to them, dear Eva, and I will come as soon as I can."

Eva was on the point of saying, "You need not see Morgan;" but she remembered

they must so often meet, that it would be useless to try to save her from the interview now ; so she only said, "There is no need to hurry ; I will explain to them that you are putting up the paints."

Eva found Lady Lawrence with the two young men in the picture-gallery, and was shocked at the change she perceived in Morgan's appearance ; but a warning glance of Henry's prevented her from appearing to take any notice of it. She felt a secret dread that the hour of bitter trial for Nesta was destined soon to occur. Lady Lawrence, however, was not so quick-sighted, for she possessed no clue to unravel the real cause of his apparent illness. So she expressed her regret at seeing him look so ill, but added, she had always predicted that Parliament would be the death of him, and she also declared that a public life killed many men before their time. "You throw away health for the country which never was and never will be grateful for it," said she ; and the kind old lady began to recount the number of persons who had been victims to over-work.

"Has Miss De Lacy finished your picture?" inquired Henry.

"She has;" said Eva, "and if you like to come with me you can help to bring it," for she thought he wanted to speak to her about his brother.

"It is all over. May God help him to bear it," said Henry, as soon as they had left the picture-gallery; and he had just time to explain to Eva what had occurred between Morgan and Honoria, before they met Nesta in the next room. She returned with them to the boudoir, but they did not allow her to perceive that anything had happened. And she contrived to assume a cheerful look as she showed Henry the portrait she had finished of his future wife. He then carried it into the gallery.

"It is a beautiful picture, the best she has yet done. Quite," said Lady Lawrence, after they had placed it in a proper light on a chair. "How pleased Aunt Mary will be with this!"

Morgan shuddered; for the mention of Aunt Mary recalled more vividly to his mind the bitter disappointment he had ex-

perienced. Nesta soon saw that he was troubled, and she longed to say or do something that might cheer or distract him, but she saw it was impossible. There was a feeling of constraint over the party which was embarrassing for all, and it was a relief when some visitors were announced, and the conversation became general.

CHAPTER XVI.

Too great efforts to secure happiness in this life
Are said to bring more failure than delight,
And are rather at enmity with good health.
I applaud less what is extreme than the sentiment of "Nothing in
excess."
And the wise will agree with me.

EURIPIDES.

WHEN Morgan O'Neil convicted Honoria of being guilty of deceit, and placed the proof of it under her own eyes, he left her without saying another word. She scarcely saw that he was gone—the bitter humiliation of being discovered, the sense of shame at her own deceit, seemed to annihilate her completely. The meanness of her act had never appeared so great as since she perceived the horror and indignation evinced

by Morgan, and for a few moments she felt that she was unworthy of his love. Perhaps, if Aunt Mary, or some kind friend who could read her heart, had been present at this moment, the consequences of this humiliation, of her softened contrite feeling, might have been more lasting. But there was no one near, and she did not pray to be forgiven, and, as she found contrition a most painful state, she soon shrank from it. Yet, for a few days she was deeply crushed by this unexpected blow. However, her pride enabled her to appear comparatively unmoved. She went about as usual, and sometimes she evinced even more gaiety than before. At times she persuaded herself that Morgan would forgive her at last—that he did not really intend to give her up for ever.

She did not meet him at any of the parties, and when her father wondered why he never called, she answered, with well-assumed unconcern, that he was absorbed in his political employments.

The day arrived on which they had long been engaged to dine with Lord Dumbleton.

Honorina succeeded in getting a very pretty dress for the occasion, and she was so particular about her coiffure, and tried so many different wreaths and head-dresses, that Mademoiselle Florentine was quite bewildered, and muttered, as Honorina left the room, "*Elle est trop parée ce soir.*"

"What can have become of Morgan?" said Mr. Verdon, as they drove to Lord Dumbleton's house; and then, after scrutinising Honorina's face, he added, "Ye don't look as well as ye did when we first came to town, me girl, and I don't think you, or Morgan either, have got any good from all these balls and parties. It'll be a stiff dinner to-day, all grandees," he added, after a pause. "I suppose his aunt, the Duchess of Dalton, does the honours for him, and she's as stiff as a poker: nice girl, though, that is of hers, Lady Diana—not like her mother; quite pleasant and affable."

"Oh, she's a weak little thing," said Honorina, as she gave a satisfied glance at herself in the opposite window of the large family coach.

"I don't think she is, though. I'd back

her to break in a horse better than you. I saw her yesterday riding one in the Park I don't think ye could manage, me girl, nor many grooms either. I say she's as spirited a little creature as ever lived."

"Was Lord Dumbleton with her?"

"Indeed and he was, and proud of her he looked, and well he might, for the whole row of loungers were admiring the way she sat, and I heard some of them say he is engaged to her."

"I know that's not the case."

"Maybe he told you so?"

They were now driving in at the gates of the beautiful garden which surrounded Dumbleton House.

Honorina admired the lofty pile of building, with its porticos and palatial courts.

Mr. Verdon piqued himself on being punctual, so they were almost the first to arrive, and found only Mr. Praid in the drawing-room.

"Just the person of all others I did not want to meet," thought Honorina, as she felt his keen eyes directed towards her. "He is sure either to know the whole thing already,

or else he will draw it out from me in some provoking manner."

Since her quarrel with Morgan, Honoria was fully determined to make the best of herself, and she, half unconsciously, felt that if she could not marry the only man she could ever love, she would endeavour to ensure the best possible position—the largest share of this world's goods, and the greatest amount of admiration and influence. So she went to the dinner-party determined to secure the heart of her host.

"He says he is often taken in," thought Honoria, "and as he admired me so much when I did not care for him, he must now be dazzled by me if I put forth the full force of my energy to fascinate and charm him."

"This may be very wise and far-sighted, Miss Honoria," Aunt Mary would have said, had she been present; "but you have had no experience, my poor girl; you do not yet know the intricacies of men's hearts and fancies. You think that because the young Marquis is not clever or brilliant, he cannot see through better actresses than you have

yet become. You have not discovered that all persons who from childhood have been placed in the almost princely position that such an heir-apparent as he, occupies, have acquired the art (which often characterises royal dynasties) of distinguishing the true from the false—reading quickly the true characters of those who come under their notice.”

He confessed to Mr. Praid that he was tired of being taken in, and had sufficient good sense and humility to acknowledge that he was not a wise man. This very self-distrust indicated an amount of self-knowledge not often attained till much later in life, and only showed that he was tired of not finding anything but actors and actresses, of not being able to believe in the truth and real worth of the numbers who infested his path and obtruded themselves on his observation. So that the Marquis of twenty-two was more than a match for the Irish beauty of eighteen.

The whole plan of her operations that day was a mistake. The unusual care and thought she had bestowed on her dress im-

parted to her whole exterior a less easy and natural appearance than usual. She was conscious of being well, expensively, and becomingly dressed, and her proud lip curled as she looked on Lady Diana Myland's homely and unadorned attire, and her small, unmarked features; for Lady Diana had come in a simple white dress, and, as she was not going to any other party that evening, she wore no ornament except a natural rose in her hair.

"She has no character, no expression," thought Honoria; "and such a little insignificant figure, quite unfit to be at the head of such an establishment, to do the honours of such a princely house as this. He never will be such a fool as to prefer that "Cousin" Di to me," added the self-satisfied beauty, as she was handed in to dinner by a plain young man, and passed triumphantly the numerous looking-glasses that repeated her splendid figure and stately walk, as she passed through the long suite of rooms. She was well placed at dinner, with four of the Marquis himself, near enough to talk with eyes and lips, and also to show off her

lovely profile, and well-turned neck and shoulders, when she occasionally turned away from him to talk to the plain young man. And she felt his eyes were upon her even then; that he was watching her with —was it quite the full admiration she expected?

Mr. Praid was a long way off, nearly at the farther end of the table, but still she sometimes felt that his sharp eyes were watching her also, and with disapproving looks.

Lady Diana Myland was just opposite, and within three of the Marquis, and enjoyed, therefore, the same facility to speak to him as Honoria. But she was evidently not endeavouring to attract his notice, for she was talking away to an elderly man on the farther side, and her face was turned towards him nearly all dinner-time. She seemed to be amusing him, for he laughed heartily several times, and rubbed his hands with glee.

“How strange and stupid of her,” thought Honoria, to waste her time in talking to that old fogey.”

When the ladies went into the drawing-room, Honoria did not feel quite so well pleased with herself as usual, but she attributed the feeling of gêne she experienced to the presence of the Duchess, and two or three other stately dowagers, who she fancied looked formal, and regarded her with an indifference which she construed into coldness and dislike. The good-natured Lady Diana, who saw that she was not quite at her ease, went up and talked to her, and with courtesy and true kindness did her best to amuse her and engage her attention.

But Honoria was not in the humour to see this real kindness in its true light, and she rather resented what she wilfully imagined to be a protecting air. However, they contrived to talk together, and at this moment a looker-on would have been struck by the contrast between them—not so much that of beauty as of expression. Lady Diana's earnest eyes (her best features) were lighted up by that persevering kindness which determined her not to see or heed the slighting indifference of the other; her pretty little mouth and dimpled chin were

full of that joyousness which proceeds from innocence of heart. She was leaning forward and looking up into Honoria's face, her well-rounded arms rested on her knees, and her little hands were clasped with a kind of patient perseverance which denoted that she was determined to make an effort to be Honoria's friend, for she admired the Irish beauty extremely. Honoria looked her worst. There was a proud reckless despair in her dark eyes; her attention was constrained, and her position less than usually graceful, for when the mind is at variance with itself, its covering insensibly partakes of the same character.

It was most unfortunate for her designs on the Marquis, that he happened to see her at this very moment. He and Mr. Praid had come into the conservatory, and through the glass door they could see into the room without being perceived.

They both stood, and both observed narrowly the same ladies, and both were impressed with the same idea; neither spoke. They could not hear what Lady Diana was saying, but they could see the cold con-

temptuous manner in which Honoria listened, and Mr. Praid read disenchantment on the Marquis's face. They remained there a few minutes till the other gentlemen went into the drawing-room, and they saw the sudden change on Honoria's face as she turned round full of smiles and good humour, and put on her company-face in expectation of receiving her usual meed of admiration from the male sex.

"Well, was I not right?" said Mr. Praid, as they turned away from the glass door, and went still farther into the conservatory. "Was I not right? Is not Lady Diana worth a thousand reigning beauties?"

"I never saw that Irish beauty look so little attractive as she does to-night; if it were not for her father, that good, honest-hearted man, I should be almost inclined to take no more notice of her. I shall ask Di to come with us to the pic-nic, and you must accompany us also. You must help me; not that I think there is any chance now of my becoming a slave to her beauty. But see, the poor girl is not, however, really so artful," he said, as, on looking again

through the door, he saw her leaning her head on her hand with a dejected air.

"No," said Mr. Praid; "there is much power and some good in her, and she might have turned out well if she had not had the folly deliberately to throw away her only chance."

"What, that handsome Irish member?"

"Yes; she might have been happy with him on his nine hundred a year; and now she will never be even contented if she becomes mistress of all your houses and castles, or even if she were to become Duchess of Dalton."

"Why can't they make it up, then?"

"Impossible, I think; for though O'Neil loved her more than he can any other woman again, his ambition will help to reconcile him to her loss, and he will, of course, soon build up the ruined castles and restore the old domains formerly belonging to his family by marrying the heiress, who evidently likes him."

"What, that nice little Miss De Lacy, I suppose; but surely he will never do for her. I know enough to show me that."

"No, it would be complete destruction to her happiness. Any woman that such a man as O'Neil will marry for her fortune and influence, will be worse than his slave; whenever he ceases to have self-respect, he will become utterly depraved."

"Ah, dear, what a sad prospect you hold out for them all. Could you not try to reconcile him with the beautiful girl? He may have been jealous of me. Shall I ask him to the pic-nic also?"

"Do so. Try; but I think his purpose is now unchangeable."

"Look! see how kind Di is to her; she sees she is unhappy; look! how well she is trying to amuse her."

"Yes, she is a generous creature; for I dare say she is clever enough to know that the beauty would like to cut her out."

"No doubt she does; a clever little thing is Cousin Di, generous-hearted, and so good," said Lord Dumbleton, with a sigh. "Do you know, I sometimes think she is much too good for me."

"That is very probable," said Mr. Praid; "but if she would be content to take you

with all your sins, all your wasted time and perverted feelings—if she is satisfied to take you to her pure arms, and shower all the riches of her mind and loving heart on you, you ought to be most grateful. You ought to give her the gigantic blessing of feeling that she is reclaiming you, that she is saving a human being to whom Providence has given the awful responsibility of great riches. Oh, why not give her that delight, and fall down on your knees and thank God that He offers such a chance—such a boon to one so little worthy of it !”

“ That’s true ; you are quite right,” said Lord Dumbleton. “ I’ll think about it seriously ; and now I’ll go and ask Cousin Di to join the party to Ogres Wood.”

CHAPTER XVII.

Nobility is thine, and thy demeanour is the proof of it;
This appearance thou hast, whoever thou art, oh lady!
One may most often know about a person
By seeing his appearance, whether he springs by nature from a
noble-minded race.

EURIPIDES.

EVA DROMORE left De Lacy House with her father the day after Morgan had obtained the proof of Honoria's deceit.

It was a sad parting, for Eva was full of anxiety about the fate of her friend, and would have remained with her. But she knew that her own mother was ill, and that it was quite necessary she should return with her father to Carrigtown without any further delay.

Henry O'Neil accompanied them as far

as Bristol, and was then to have gone to Yorkshire, but in consequence of the anxiety evinced by Eva, he intended to return for a few days to London and see Nesta. He had perceived with sorrow the alteration in his brother after the discovery of Honoria's duplicity. But he knew, by sad experience, that when Morgan's irritable temper was thoroughly roused it seemed to be utterly uncontrollable, and that if ever a person gave him cause for dislike, his hatred was intense.

"I know Morgan will never forgive her," said he, when Eva said she could not help somehow indulging in a faint hope that Honoria's contrition might eventually touch his heart. "Never; and I believe you are more anxious for the reconciliation on Nesta's account, than from a regard to my brother's or Honoria's happiness."

"It is true I am frightened at your brother, I must confess, for I cannot understand him; but I have often thought that he is resolved—that he has long been resolved to make Nesta care for him, and that he has

contrived to make Honoria care less for him, although I don't think she is aware of it herself."

"You are a deep reader of human nature, because you have been taught to know yourself, dear Eva, or rather you have endeavoured to search your own heart by the test of Scripture, and this imparts some of the serpent's wisdom as much as the dove's innocence; but I do not wonder that my brother baffled your penetration, for I confess I know him less than I do any of my intimate friends or relations—much less. But I am convinced that if I were in any way to hint that he must not endeavour to obtain Nesta's affections, he would quarrel with me quite."

"I fear, indeed, it will be useless, and my only hope is in that dear good Aunt Mary. I fortunately succeeded in persuading Lady Lawrence to write and ask her to come to London."

* * * * *

Aunt Mary started for London the moment she received Lady Lawrence's letter,

but before she saw any of the people in whom she felt a deep interest she sent for her old friend Mr. Praid, and made him give her an exact account of all he had observed.

CHAPTER XVIII.

What is good and right we understand and know,
But we do not practise; some from idleness,
Others from preferring some other pleasure instead of what is
Right and good.

EURIPIDES.

"I AM quite willing to leave London, dear aunt, if you think we had better go," said Nesta; "only tell me whether you wish this because you are afraid I may—that I may be persuaded to——"

"Yes, dear child, it is; for although you had the strength of mind to refuse him last night, you would be obliged to meet sometimes if you remained here, and I—that is, Miss Bridgeman is afraid. I own I think her fears are groundless, for I ought to know you better than she can"—and Lady

Lawrence drew herself up with a dignified air and proud look—"and I told her I was convinced that what you thought right to decide on, you would be firm to, and that nothing would induce you to act contrary to your principles of right and wrong. I have seen it ever since you were a baby. I have perfect confidence in you, and if all the handsome men in the world were to propose, it would never turn you for an instant."

"Thank you, dearest aunt, but I am afraid you think much too well of me: I have been so very foolish about all this, that I feel quite ashamed. I knew he was almost engaged to Miss Verdon—and yet—and yet——"

"And yet you admired and liked to talk to him, or rather to hear him talk, and to listen to his clever speeches in the House, that was all. Don't be romantic and fancy yourself in love when I know you are not. Well, then, if we are to leave London before we intended, we must send excuses without delay to all these engagements."

Poor Nesta felt that her aunt did not

understand her: this made her feel still more solitary, and it was humiliating that her aunt had a much higher opinion of her firmness and strength of purpose than she felt conscious of deserving. But she was convinced it was better that they should leave London; she would rather not meet him any more. She repeated this to herself whilst the preparations were being made for their journey. Yes, she would rather go; and yet, when they arrived at her magnificent place in Yorkshire, Knutsford Hall, she felt there was a sad blank. The large rooms, the vast expanse of park, impressed her with a sense of loneliness and of the inutility of all these possessions to herself alone. The very brilliancy of the flower-gardens, the varied colouring of the highly cultivated parterres shining in the brightness of long summer days, all seemed a painful contrast to her own solitary feelings. All was bright around, and formed a deeper contrast to the dark shadow that rested on her own heart.

Lord Mowbray, who of course knew all that had taken place before Miss De Lacy

left London, purposely kept away from Stapleton Park, his own house, which was only about six miles from Knutsford Hall. But after the young heiress had passed upwards of a month at her Yorkshire home, and that he heard from Lady Lawrence that her spirits were unusually low, and that she looked ill and languid, he could no longer refrain from seeing her, and therefore returned to his home towards the beginning of September. About this time a shooting-party arrived. Lady Lawrence thought the amusement and distraction of entertaining her guests would rouse Nesta from the state of despondency into which she seemed to have fallen, but it appeared to have a contrary effect. She was more languid and more pale, and unable to endure any fatigue. Lord Mowbray fairly frightened Lady Lawrence about her niece's health, and she determined to take her to London and consult the family physician.

Doctor Rogers shook his head, and informed Lady Lawrence that he could do nothing—it was entirely her nerves—perhaps travelling abroad might be of use.

Nesta felt that the climate of Ireland would be of more use than that of any foreign country, for whenever she thought of the old castles and mountains and wild glens, she felt a kind of joy for which she was at a loss to account.

"We need not meet Mr. O'Neil," she said to Lady Lawrence, as soon as they had determined to go.

"No, of course not, my dear, but I should not be afraid of your meeting him. I can't believe this illness has anything to do with it, although the doctor will try to persuade me that it is owing to some disappointment. I will never believe that a De Lacy could be so silly as to be made ill by such a thing."

Lord Mowbray went to London also in order to hear the opinion of Doctor Rogers, but he carefully concealed from Nesta his feelings towards her, for he saw, much more plainly than Lady Lawrence did, the true cause of her illness, and he was convinced that to urge his claim to her hand in her present state of mind would only increase her misery.

He had long been resolved to sacrifice his own feelings, should he become convinced that she loved a person likely to make her happy; but he could not persuade himself to believe that it would be right to encourage Morgan O'Neil. On the other hand, he himself was afraid that his own love for her might bias his judgment and increase the unfavourable opinion he had of Morgan; so that he seemed likely to err on the side of charity, and apprehend less danger from the match than any of her other friends anticipated. Therefore, when Dr. Rogers advised change of climate and scene, and Nesta expressed a wish to visit Ireland instead of going abroad, he did not express any disapprobation, although he felt it might entail the risk of her meeting the young Irishman whose property adjoined that of the De Lacys.

"He could not really have loved her, then," would be an average remark on this resolution of his. But he *did* love her with very strong reality; yet, be it remembered that he was her guardian—that the peculiar delicacy of such a position under such cir-

cumstances was further increased by the fact that Nesta's mother had been known to have expressed a wish for her daughter's future marriage with him—that this expressed wish of her mother's would give him an undue advantage if he chose to exert it, while it was very doubtful whether, by her own unbiased inclination, she would ever accept him.

He made up his mind, then, to sacrifice himself; yet he did not even satisfy his conscience by doing so. There remained behind the question, "Am I not sacrificing her as well as myself? Am I not virtually giving her to this stranger, and giving up a chance that might be fairly mine?"

CHAPTER XIX.

Alas! for the ills of mortals, and their baneful diseases.
What shall I do for thee? And what shall I not do?
Here is the brilliant sunlight for thee, and the pure air;
And now the couch, whereon thou liest
In thine illness, is brought out of the house,
For the wish to come out here was expressed in all thy words;
But very soon thou wilt be anxious to return home again.
For quickly changing, all seems fallacious to thee, and out of
season,
Nor canst thou be pleased with what is present,
But what is absent thou deemest more agreeable.

EURIPIDES.

EVA DROMORE heard, of course, with great delight of their determination to visit Ireland, and began immediately to have the house at Carrigroghan prepared for their reception. A few days after she received the letter from Nesta she heard that Morgan O'Neil was making use of the vaca-

tion to travel in Italy. Honoria was on a visit to the Glenmaurices, where Aunt Mary was also staying. "So we shall have it all to ourselves," wrote Eva, who felt very hopeful that the delicious air and lovely scenery near Carrigroghan would be of use to Nesta's health.

And so it proved, for Nesta imagined that the delight which the sight of all the beautiful scenery inspired was caused by the pleasure of being with Eva once more.

"I never thought I should be able to feel so glad again," said she, as she sauntered with her friend on the broad terrace-walk, which commanded a distant view of the towers of the old ruined castle where she had first seen Morgan O'Neil. "I feel that it is possible I may now recover my strength."

Eva had endeavoured to conceal the distress she felt at seeing the sad change in Nesta's appearance, for although she had been prepared by Lady Lawrence's letters she had not expected her to be so thin, and pale, and weak. Her step had lost all its elasticity, and the look of dejection which

formerly sometimes clouded her face when alone in her home, had now become almost habitual. Eva had dreaded lest, if this loss of health and spirits were really attributable to her refusal of Morgan O'Neil, the very sight of the place which was connected with him would rather tend to increase, than diminish her depression. It was, therefore, a great relief to Eva when she found that it appeared to have quite a contrary effect; yet she could not help dreading lest the improvement would be only temporary.

However, weeks passed on, and Nesta's health continued to improve, but she could take very little exercise. She drove out with Eva in a little pony-carriage, and visited the poor people. There were some cottages at Glenfinlan, a little glen about two miles off, which they often visited; half way up the mountain beyond there was another cottage, which Nesta had never yet reached, for the road was too steep to drive, but she expressed such a wish to go up there that Eva suggested she should bring a riding-pony and go when she felt a little stronger. So one fine afternoon they ac-

completed the expedition, and reached the romantic spot. The scenery was wild and beautiful, and a fine waterfall rushed down the rocks, while the steep mountain declivity on either side was covered with arbutus and other evergreens, which grow so luxuriantly in some parts of Ireland. Nesta had brought up her sketch-book, and, for the first time since her illness, she began to make a drawing of the scene.

“Yes, it is lovely—such a scene!” said Eva; “but I should not like to live in this remote spot, and the noise of that cascade must be quite deafening from yonder cabin. What a lovely child!” she added, as a little boy, about three or four years old, came bounding down the stony path, and extended his little arms with glee apparently at the unaccustomed sight of visitors.

“He is, indeed, beautiful; and what eyes!” said Nesta. “Come here, darling,” she said, endeavouring to attract the boy’s attention; but, with the sudden caprice of untutored childhood, he repelled Nesta’s advances, and turned sulkily away.

“We are not going to hurt you, darling,”

said Eva; "come here, and show us the way to your mother's cottage."

"I've no mother at all," said the boy, looking up earnestly in Eva's face.

"Who do you live with, then?"

"Granny."

"Come and show us the way to granny's cabin," said Nesta, who felt an unaccountable anxiety to ascertain whose child this was. So, putting down her sketch-book, they proceeded to mount the steep path.

The child ran up before them, and an old woman appeared at the door, and peered about with her large eyes in that distrustful manner, with that stealthy and suspicious glance, often seen in the peasantry of Ireland, and which has been produced by centuries of oppression and depression.

"What a beautiful place you live in," said Nesta, in her most conciliatory tone and manner.

"Yes, it's a fine wild place, but, maybe, your honour would not just like to stay up here from year's end to year's end, and hear no sound but the rush of the torrent and the cry of the eagles," said the old woman,

with the injured bitterness in her tone often caused by some great disappointment.

"This young lady is Miss De Lacy," said Eva, who was somewhat annoyed at the rude expression on the old woman's face.

"I know well enough who she is, and that her lands and castles were once the O'Neils' domains."

"They have some still," said Nesta, as if in apology for her own usurpation of them.

"More's the pity," said the old woman, with an absent look and in a low-muttering tone, as if not intended to be heard.

"And this lovely boy is your grandson, is he?"

The woman did not answer, but her dark eyes kindled with such a look of fury that Eva began to fear lest she was mad.

"Your cabin seems in bad repair," said Nesta; "can I do anything for you? I should be glad to have it repaired."

"No, no; sure it's not any repairs I want; it's good enough for me, and 'll last my time," she said, with an air of proud defiance; and then, looking at the boy, she said, in a softer tone: "And when I am

gathered to my fathers, the priest has promised to take the child and bring him up to serve in the Holy Church."

"He has lost both his parents, then?" inquired Nesta.

"Who said he had lost both his parents?" said the old woman. And her eyes flashed with such angry defiance, that Eva endeavoured to draw her friend away.

"It will be late before we get home," said she to Nesta, "and your aunt will be anxious at our absence."

"How I should like to make a likeness of that child," said Nesta, as she reluctantly turned away from the cottage. "Will you come, darling, to Carrigroghan?" she said to the boy, in hopes the grandmother might consent to let him come.

"No, no, it's not for the likes of he to step on fine carpets—indeed, and it's not he that shall darken your doors. Come here, ye spalpeen," she continued, as if she felt jealous of the impression the ladies might make on the child. "Come here, then, you lazy spalpeen," she added, in a still more angry tone, as the child cowered

beneath her gaze, and now seemed to cling to Eva.

"You must obey your grandmother," said Eva, for she was well accustomed to the strange ways of the poor people, and always endeavoured to inculcate obedience from the children to their parents when she visited their cabins.

"How dreadful to think that that dear, beautiful child should be under the care of that old mad woman," said Nesta, as soon as they were out of hearing. "Could not we do anything about it?"

"I will inquire of the priest," said Eva; "Father Murphy is a very good man, and if he thinks she really is mad, then, perhaps, something——"

"I never saw such splendid eyes," said Nesta, with a sigh, for she felt they reminded her of a certain pair of eyes that would often appear in her dreams, and at times in her waking hours would obtrude between her and what she wished to think of or behold. "Your father is very intimate with the priest, is he not?"

"Yes; for papa found he could be of so

little use to the poor people when we first came, that he contrived to ingratiate himself with their spiritual adviser, and he found Father Murphy a most large-minded and good man, and quite willing that papa should assist in doing as much good as possible to the poor, and they are now great friends."

"I should like to know him," said Nesta.

"I am afraid Lady Lawrence would object; there is such a strong prejudice against what they call 'Papists,' and so much party feeling in this poor country, that probably Father Murphy would not even venture to come near Carrigroghan."

"There must be some strange mystery about that child. I am afraid its poor mother must have done something wrong, like Molly Rush's daughter at Knutsford.

"I am afraid so; but that kind of thing is so much more rare in Ireland than it unfortunately is in England. We have not met with any of the sad cases which occurred in our poor Yorkshire village."

Nesta was not so well that evening, and the next morning Eva perceived with dismay

that her spirits seemed to be as much depressed as when she first arrived in Ireland, and that she looked quite ill ; whether it was that the expedition had been too fatiguing, or that the peculiar expression of that child's eyes had reminded her of some one whom she strove to forget, Eva would not venture to inquire ; but from that day her health gradually sank, and she soon became alarmingly ill.

CHAPTER XX.

It is better to be ill than to nurse those who suffer ;
One is a simple ailment, but the other unites
Anxiety of mind and wearying toil for the hands ;
But painful is the whole life of man,
Nor is there ever any rest from their toils ;
Yet whatever there is besides, that is preferable to life,
Darkness envelopes, and hides it in clouds.
Therefore we seem passionately to love this state of being,
Because it presents a bright appearance to us on earth,
Through inexperience of another life,
And the non-revelation of things under the earth.

EURIPIDES.

TOWARDS the end of that month Aunt Mary returned to Dingleford Castle with Honoria. Although she had been unable to effect any reconciliation between her and Morgan O'Neil, and was extremely angry with Honoria for her deceitful conduct towards him, yet she would not desert her

entirely, and she was to spend part of the winter in her old quarters in the tower.

The family at Dingleford Castle had never become very intimate with the inmates of Carrigroghan, for Nesta instinctively shrank from seeing those who were connected in her mind with a forbidden and painful subject. So it was some days before Aunt Mary heard of Nesta's illness.

Eva went to tell her of it so soon as she heard of her arrival, in hopes that she might suggest some plan which could be of use, for Lady Lawrence was in despair at her niece's illness, and utterly at a loss what to do. Aunt Mary drove over there immediately ; and on hearing that Nesta was still in her room she went up alone, and talked with her some time.

Lady Lawrence professed to have no great hopes or confidence in any plan Aunt Mary might suggest, for she observed that it was impossible a comparative stranger could be so well acquainted with her niece's character and requirements as she was herself. But still she was glad that Nesta should have the advantage of judicious advice from a person

who was so much looked up to as Aunt Mary; so she accosted her when she came down from Nesta's room with more than usual impatience.

"Well, my dear Miss Bridgeman" (Lady Lawrence never would call her Aunt Mary, she thought it so foolish of everybody, and disrespectful too), "what do you think of our dear invalid?"

"You must first take her to London and consult Dr. Daventry, and he will, probably, advise that she should go and pass the winter in Italy."

"But the air here did her so much good; she was getting quite well till about a fortnight ago. It shows that the air of this place must be advantageous—that her illness cannot be entirely owing to the climate."

"I think I see the cause of her improved spirits at first. But I am afraid now that the weather has become so much colder this climate will not agree so well—in fact, I can think of nothing better than Italy; but perhaps Dr. Daventry may suggest something better."

"But you do not seriously think that her disappointment—that her having refused Mr. O'Neil, has anything to do with this illness?"

"I do, indeed; but I know you will not believe it."

"Did you know that he is in Italy?"

"Yes; I heard he was. But Italy is a large place; they may not meet, or if they do, and that she should become better acquainted with him, the illusion under which she is now suffering may be dispelled. I think it would, if she could have the same opportunity of seeing him that others have; but the danger is that she will not. He will always be acting a part while she is present, and he will make her see him through a rose-coloured medium."

"All that is great nonsense, I think; however, if Dr. Daventry and Lord Mowbray approve, I will take her to Italy."

So it was arranged that Lady Lawrence and Nesta were to start for England the following day.

CHAPTER XXI.

With others indeed I have laboured contending on subjects
Of this kind. For some one has said that
The worse things among mortals are greater than the better.
But I hold an opposite opinion to this, and that is,
That good things are greater than bad ones to mortals :
For if this were not so, we should not exist in the light.
I praise him of the gods who from confused disorder
And savage state regulated our lives,
First inspiring intelligence, and then, as to a messenger
Gave the tongue words so as to know speech ;
And to cultivate fruits, and for that cultivation rain from the
 heavens
Falling, so that the produce of the earth may thrive,
And the appetite may be refreshed. And, besides this, he gave
Defences against cold, and to keep off the burning heat of the sun
And the means of sailing over the sea, that we might have
Intercourse with each other, and interchange of those things which
 a country might require.
But concerning whatever is obscure, and what we know not clearly,
Looking into fire, and down on the folds of the entrails,
And also from birds, diviners foretel the future.
Are we not then hard to please—when God, having bestowed such
An apparatus for life—yet we are not satisfied with all this ?
But our pride of intellect strives to be greater than God's,
And searching in the arrogance of our minds,
We deem ourselves to be wiser than the Deity.

EURIPIDES.

AFTER Miss De Lacy and her aunt left
Carrigroghan, Aunt Mary passed several

months at Dingleford Castle. She was induced to remain there because she felt that it was possible for her to be of some little use to the child Alice and the wild boys; but every day she became more convinced that any influence she might once have had over Honoria was gone.

This was the first winter she had passed in Ireland, and it was, fortunately, one of those mild seasons when half the days in the week are sunshiny, and when the glowing tints on the arbutus woods and myrtles are lighted up with the brilliant rays of a winter sun, so that we can scarcely fancy it is not June.

She enjoyed her long evenings, too, in the high turret-chamber, and her astronomical observation of the star-lit skies; for when the skies are devoid of clouds in Ireland, there are few countries which afford such a clear sight of the celestial bodies. After Lady Lawrence and Nesta were gone, Aunt Mary persuaded Eva often to come, for she was convinced that the presence of that dear girl was advantageous to the whole family. Even Honoria's proud, cold, hard defiance,

which had become almost habitual, would sometimes melt in the genial atmosphere of Eva's society.

Aunt Mary often accompanied Eva in her visits to the poor people, where they sometimes met Father Murphy. Eva told her of the expedition she had made with Nesta to the strange woman's cabin in Glenfinlan, which had been, apparently, the cause of Miss De Lacy's relapse; and she also told Aunt Mary, what, of course, she had never mentioned to Nesta, that she had been startled at the resemblance of the child to Morgan O'Neil.

She wished, and yet she felt reluctant, to ask Father Murphy about the wild-looking woman, who, she feared, was scarcely fit to have the sole care of that child.

Aunt Mary determined to go there, and told Eva that she would endeavour to persuade the priest to accompany them. So one fine frosty morning they started at an early hour on two little rough ponies, and called at Father Murphy's house. The good father was not at home, but his old servant said they'd be sure to "find his riverence at the

school, at the end of the village over agin the blacksmith's; but the young lady knows where it is well enough. May the Lord bless her blue eyes, for they always bring Heaven's own sunshine down on whoever they look at."

They found Father Murphy correcting a Latin exercise for one of the boys; but when he heard that Aunt Mary wished to visit Glenfinlan, he expressed his willingness to accompany her immediately.

By most of the Protestant people in the neighbourhood Father Murphy was called a "Jesuit," but Aunt Mary thought she had seldom seen a more hearty specimen of the genial and jovial Irish priest—one of the open-hearted and open-mouthed broad south of Ireland faces, with a twinkle of humour lurking in the corners of their eyes, in which the very wrinkles of the forehead seem to dance with fun. Father Murphy possessed in an eminent degree that combination of good humour and shrewd penetration which is exactly qualified to cheer heavenwards the poorest peasantry on earth, and to help them to forget the sufferings of real hunger

during the bitter six weeks of that beautiful summer-time when all nature seems to rejoice in its plenty, except the real Irish poor, who depend on potatoes for their daily food. And during this time, which they emphatically call the "bitter six weeks," when the crop of old potatoes is exhausted and the new ones are not yet come in—in these long sunshiny days, the peasantry are often almost starved to death.

"If that's a surefooted pony, I'd show you a shorter way to Glenfinlan, and more beautiful too. I'd take you right across yonder height that is covered up to the very summit with evergreens, and you could look straight down from it into the sea."

Aunt Mary was delighted to see this scenery, where she had never been before.

They proceeded up the toilsome mountain path, but when at length they had surmounted the most rugged part of it and looked back, the prospect was wonderful, for the hoar frost still glistened on the evergreens which clothed the mountain sides, and shone like diamonds in the brilliant sunshine.

"How beautiful is the repose of frost," said she. "All clear above, the slight mists gradually rising up, and as they are drawn heavenwards they become dispersed, or rather cease to be."

"Ay, so I trust it will be with our sins," said Father Murphy. "The mists caused by bad feeling, perverseness, and self-indulgence in this our fallen state, are gradually drawn up; for a time we see them plainer, like the clouds into which the dewy mists are transformed, they look almost dark as they approach the mountain-top. Later we look up again, and lo! they have utterly disappeared."

"Perhaps," said Aunt Mary, "our well-cultivated memories—I mean the recollection of those times when we have striven to do our best; when we have felt the peace which successful periods of warfare with our own evil inclinations gives, or that we have been able to attain cheerful resignation to adverse circumstances—perhaps the remembrance of these periods may be one of the sources of our happiness in the next world of which nothing can deprive us."

“Very likely,” said Father Murphy.

“I am afraid,” she continued, “that some of my happiest hours and days have been when I was engaged in composing or writing some tale, and those places have left the most pleasing impression on my mind in which I wrote my favourite books. Perhaps, however, this enjoyment was not entirely caused by the act of composition, but partly from being comparatively peaceful, and free from anxious cares and suspense, which enabled me to write at all. I have so little power over my mind, although it is considered ‘strong,’ that I cannot force it to contemplate its own creations—I cannot cause my imagination to act when I am suffering from anxiety about those I love.”

Eva remained a little in the rear in order to allow Aunt Mary to question the good father about the strange woman, the Widow O'More, whom they were going to visit. Aunt Mary had no difficulty in leading her companion to talk of Eva, for the good priest was loud in her praises, and then she inquired whether he had heard of her engagement to the young Henry O'Neil.

"Faix, then, I have, and more's the pity," said Father Murphy, with sudden gravity.

"You do not approve, I suppose, of clergymen marrying?"

"Sure, then, it's not for the likes of me to be finding fault with others, and the Rev. Mr. Dromore helps me so well to cheer up our poor people, that I have no complaints to make."

"Surely there can be no other objection? Have you ever seen Henry?"

"I have not, for I have only heard of his being once here since I came. I have only been in these parts two years come next Candlemas, but I hear he is like his brother."

"In looks, perhaps, but very different in character to Morgan."

"Maybe, for aught I know," said he, with a grave air.

"And you do not approve of Morgan, I suppose?"

"Sure, then, I can't say anything against him, and when I read his speeches in Parliament I can't help wishing there were more like him."

"That's true; he has a fine nature and intellect, the elements of a very fine character, and I was very sorry when his marriage with Miss Verdon was broken off."

"That's true for you, but I think I heard it was the young lady's doing entirely."

"It was indeed, but now I fear he wishes to marry Miss De Lacy."

"And why do you *fear*, sure she might go farther and not find such a likely chap."

"Is that your real opinion? I suppose you have observed that he is kind to the poor, and that he endeavours to improve his tenantry?"

"I can't just say that, for his lands are out of my parish, but I never heard tell of anything that was not quite just and right in his dealings with them. But I see you are afraid he may not make a good husband; and sure Miss De Lacy is a delicate flower, may God bless her pretty lily-white face. And perhaps you are right, and maybe he's too rough and ambitious, and would think more of his fine speeches than he would of his wife. I dare say you know best."

"But you would like to see all the broad

lands restored to their original possessors, perhaps," inquired Aunt Mary, in hopes of eliciting the motive which induced him to look rather favourably than otherwise upon a man whom all Miss De Lacy's friends disapproved of.

"Well, I might say that's true. It would be fine if the chief of the O'Neils recovered his property. I hear the poor young lady likes him better than a great lord with no end of lands in England that wants to marry her; and, thinks I to myself, what's the use of all the riches she's got if she mustn't marry the man she chooses? But does your honour think the O'Neil himself wishes to marry the heiress?" he added, after a pause.

"I should imagine he does; at least I understand that he made Miss De Lacy an offer last June."

"Ah, you didn't see him when he was at Carrigtown last week?"

"Last week! Are you sure he was there? We all thought he was in Italy."

"He was in a mighty great hurry, as I heard from his old nurse; but he was obliged

to come over about some pressing business, and he got over it as quickly as he could, and went back to London to prepare his speeches I suppose for Parliament."

"Then he will not meet Nesta in Italy after all," thought Aunt Mary, with a feeling of relief. "This Widow O'More, whom we are going to visit, is a strange character, is she not?"

"The poor creature has been crazed by the loss of her only child—a beautiful child—the prettiest girl in the whole county."

"Did she run away?"

"Worse than that: a deceitful villain ruined her, and then sent her adrift on the wide world with the child."

"And do you know who this villain was?"

"Deed and I do, more's the pity; but I can't tell your honour."

"Then he cannot think it can be Morgan, after all he said in his favour," reflected Aunt Mary, with another feeling of relief.

"And the poor girl, is she dead?"

"No; it would be far better, perhaps, if she were."

"But she does not live with her mother, does she?"

"No; the poor woman is left in her old age with no one to love, no one to care for her, but that wild young spalpeen of her daughter's."

By this time they had reached the upper part of Glenfinlan, and they could see the smoke from the cabin ascending behind the rock which concealed it from their view on that side, and the roar of the waterfall near it began to be heard.

"We must cross the torrent here," said Father Murphy, "and if you ladies will dismount and take my arm, I'll get you safe across the slippery stones, and come back to lead the beasts over afterwards." Eva came up to them, and they both dismounted, and stepped on the large stones which formed the only means of crossing the torrent. Aunt Mary enjoyed the wild scene, although some of the large stones were so far apart that she was obliged to jump from one to another with the assistance of both Eva and the priest. "It's easy enough now," said he, when they had reached the other side, "but

after heavy rains it requires a bold jumper to cross over."

At this moment they heard a joyful cry, and the beautiful child came bounding up the steep path, clapping his little hands with delight at seeing the good father. The old woman appeared soon afterwards, and Eva observed that her manner was quite different and much more respectful than it appeared when she visited the cabin with Nesta. She curtseyed low, asked them to come in, and said, in a solemn tone, "The Lord save and bless yer riverence, for 'tis kind ye are to the widow and fatherless. Will ye be plased to come in and sit down, and the ladies too, if they'll stoop to enter me door; an' maybe you'll like to take some praties that are just ready to rowl on to the table."

Aunt Mary was delighted to accept the old woman's offer, and she sat down on the old broken chest which served for a chair, and ate some of the potatoes and milk—the best she had ever eaten. For certainly potatoes can never be eaten in such perfection as in an Irish cabin.

There was not even an attempt at a

window. The only daylight that entered was through the open door and the gleam that came down the chimney, which, mingling with the blue smoke, imparted that peculiar colouring to the dark walls and rafters which has a curiously mysterious and picturesque effect. A spinning-wheel, which stood near the door, and a few cooking utensils and brown pans, were all the visible furniture it contained.

The widow talked readily enough with Father Murphy, and the child prattled away with noisy glee, for he was evidently very fond of the good father, but nothing was said which threw any light on the painful history of her daughter and grandchild.

CHAPTER XXII.

Phædra. Take me to the mountain, I will go to the wood,
And to the pine-trees, where the hunters chase,
And the stag-hounds tread,
The dappled hinds pursuing.
By the gods how I long to cheer on the hounds,
And by the side of my auburn hair to hurl
The Thessalian javelin, bearing in my hand
The barbed weapon.

Nurse. Such mad longings require much divination
To discover which of the gods draws thee away from the right
course,

And strikes mad thy senses, oh my child!

Phædra. Wretch that I am, what have I done,
Whither have I wandered from my good resolutions?
I have gone mad, I have fallen under some demon's curse,
Alas! alas! miserable that I am!

Nurse, cover up my head again,
For I am ashamed of what I have spoken:
Conceal me; a tear trickles down from my eyes,
And to shame my eyes have been turned;
For to come to one's senses again is painful,
Yet to be mad indeed is an evil; but it is better
To perish without the consciousness of our follies.

EURIPIDES.

“Do you think Nesta had any suspicion
that Morgan O’Neil was in any way con-

nected with that poor girl's fate?" inquired Aunt Mary, when they had left Father Murphy at his own home.

"I cannot tell, for of course I could not hint any of the ideas that have come, perhaps most foolishly, into my head. Those splendid dark eyes are most common in the south of Ireland, and perhaps it was only because they were so very beautiful and speaking that I thought they resembled Morgan's; but the suspicion, if it did occur to her, may have sadly increased the feeling of self-reproach which often troubles her. She may have regarded it as an additional proof of his unworthiness, of the truth of that which we are all endeavouring to impress upon her mind."

"If she ever suspected anything of the kind, it seems strange she did not endeavour to ascertain the truth."

"On the contrary, she shrank from the very mention of the place—of Glenfinlan—I saw plainly. But tell me, did you gather from Father Murphy anything about the poor mother?"

"He would not tell me, but from all he

said of Morgan, I am convinced that he knows he is innocent of this crime."

"Really, that is most extraordinary."

"Yes, and he said he knew who it was, and showed plainly that he regarded the author of the crime with the greatest horror, while at the same time he spoke rather well of Morgan, and seemed to think it almost a pity that Nesta should not accept him."

"How very strange!"

"It is indeed, but I am not sure that Father Murphy would have a very deep insight into such an intricate character as Morgan's, although I dare say he is an admirable judge of the faults and failures of his own peculiar flock."

"Oh, that he is indeed, and I have been often amused at the clever kind of simple way in which he makes them speak the truth—sometimes when my father has found it quite impossible to make anything of them."

"Yes, and he has the discrimination to approve of you most highly; you kindled all his enthusiasm. But he does not seem to think Morgan's brother good enough for you."

"Why so? What can he imagine? Besides, he has never seen him."

"I suppose he objects to his profession, though I did not think from his answer that he would dislike the marriage on that account."

"How very strange," said Eva, and an expression of alarm for an instant clouded her countenance.

"Well, it can't signify," said Aunt Mary, who had observed the passing cloud. "We all know what Henry is, and thank God that he is worthy even of you."

* * * *

A few days after this expedition a letter came to Eva from Lady Lawrence, written at Genoa. Nesta had suffered so much from fatigue on the journey that she was afraid of proceeding farther, so she was obliged to take a villa at Sestri, as the noise in all the best hotels was most painful for an invalid. "I am very sorry we came," wrote Lady Lawrence; "I do not know what to do with her; there is no English doctor here, and I do not see how we are to get away. That dreadful Cornice road was in such a state,

and the torrents were so deep at some places, we had to be carried through on men's shoulders ; and here we are such prisoners ! we can't stand the sea, and, this hard winter, the barricade of snow mountains is impassable except in sledges, and to return again over that Cornice road—four days' suffering ! Impossible. What an old fool I was to come ! Why was I persuaded to leave Nice after we had posted over that horrid Estrelles !”

“Poor dear Nesta, what can be done ?” thought Eva, when they had read the letter. “She is so reserved with her aunt she never utters her real thoughts to her, and therefore they prey upon her so much more.”

“Yes, that was just what I dreaded,” said Aunt Mary, when she showed her the letter. “She must feel so very solitary ; but was not Lord Mowbray to join them ?”

“Yes, at Florence, and my greatest hope is in him. I really think if Nesta would speak to him as if he were really her brother he would give her the most disinterested advice ; he only wishes her to be happy ; he is the most unselfish, generous being I ever

heard of. How sadly perverse and unfortunate it is that poor Nesta cannot love him ! One of those mysterious contrarities which sometimes perplex us."

"As you know Lord Mowbray so well, I would advise your writing to him," said Aunt Mary; "ask him to send you his own account of Nesta's health. Direct it to Florence, and say you conclude he will go to Genoa."

"I can do that, but the misfortune is that he knows very little of Morgan O'Neil, and I believe scarcely thinks that Nesta cares for him so much as she really does; for Lady Lawrence does not believe in that sort of thing, thinks it is half fancy, and laughs at the idea of a person dying for love."

"And perhaps Lord Mowbray could scarcely understand it either."

"Perhaps not quite; but he is very kind, and so very anxious for Nesta's happiness, it might enable him to enter into her feelings. How strange it would be if the betrothed lover should be the one to make up the match with his rival!"

CHAPTER XXIII.

Phædra. Raise up my body, place my head right,
I am faint, and my limbs give way, oh, my friend!
Take hold of my delicate hands, oh, attendants;
Heavy is my head-gear to support;
Take it off, and let my ringlets flow over my shoulders.

Nurse. Take courage, my child, and do not thus painfully
Change the position of thy body,
And thou wilt bear more easily thy sickness,
With the aid of a quiet and noble courageous temper.
Because suffering and toil for mortals are inevitable.

Phædra. Alas! alas! would that from the dewy fountain a draft
of pure water
I could draw, and that under the black poplars,
And in the leafy mead, reclining I might rest.

EURIPIDES.

WHEN Lady Lawrence found that her niece's health would not allow her to leave Genoa, she engaged a villa in the neighbourhood, at Sestri. It was one of those old palatial buildings, with painted walls and porticoes, that stand in an orange grove

sloping down to the sea, and the quiet freshness of its gardens and fountains was very pleasant after the noise and bustle of the hotel—the Croce di Malta.

The vast rooms and painted ceilings of the villa were well suited to an invalid who, like Nesta, was often obliged to pass most of her time on the sofa. But she was sometimes wheeled out into the garden, and she enjoyed looking at the evening sun go down into the sea, and listening to the gentle ripple of the waves. She did not think that she should regain her health, and sometimes she reproached herself for not wishing to recover. Lord Mowbray, as her nearest relative, would succeed to all her vast estates, and the responsibilities which had been to her a source of greater pain and anxiety than of enjoyment; but she knew that he would prove worthy of the trust; no one would suffer by her loss—no one, she sometimes repeated. And then she would look forward with a joyful sense of relief to the rest, the happiness, that she trusted was in store for her; and at these happy moments the blue

sea and purple mountains, the delicious perfume of orange-flowers, the splendid hues of a southern sunset, all the natural glories of this lovely world, were to her like harmonious symphonies, a prelude sung by good spirits who are about to withdraw the curtain that separates us from eternal bliss. But if this kind of happy frame of mind could always last, there would be very little suffering in this world for those who try to do right. At other times, the very beauty of everything around her seemed to cause rebellious murmurings. While she had every means for happiness, it seemed hard to be obliged to crush her truest and best feelings, and persist in rejecting the love of the only person whose admiring glance enchanted her, whose fascinating image cast a halo of delight over every object and recollection connected with him.

One day, after they had been in this villa about a week, Nesta became much worse. The weather was unusually hot for the time of year, and had that peculiar oppressing and depressing effect that a hot day out of its proper season often produces.

Nesta thought that her last hour was approaching, and she endeavoured to write a short note to Eva with a pencil as she lay on her sofa. On the back she wrote the words, "To be given to Eva Dromore when I am dead."

She contrived to do this, and to place it in her little writing-case without her aunt being aware of what she was doing. Poor Lady Lawrence was in despair at her illness, and could only moan and express her regrets that there was no doctor she could trust. "Oh," said she, "if Lord Mowbray would but come; all would be right yet, she would get well."

Towards evening a fresh breeze sprang up, and Nesta's sofa was moved nearer the open window, and she was able to look out on the blue, moonlit sea.

"Do not grieve for me, dearest aunt," said Nesta, as she heard Lady Lawrence weeping. "You have no idea how happy I am: all my troubles seem to be over. God has given me such a delicious feeling of peace, of perfect rest. That beautiful sea! Look, aunt, at that bright ray of the moon-

light that dances and sparkles so joyfully. I feel as if the happy hours I have passed here in this world were now concentrated, like the light on that sea, in one bright path that is leading me to heaven."

"Oh, do not talk so, dearest Nesta," said her aunt, sobbing violently.

"But you like me to be happy, dearest aunt, I know. Give me your hand—I want to feel you—it is getting so dark." And she took Lady Lawrence's hand, and softly pressed it, and then closed her eyes with a happy smile.

Lady Lawrence was afraid to move or speak, for Nesta had not slept for several nights, and now she hoped that she was sleeping quietly.

The door opening at the farther end of the room made her turn round, and she saw the welcome face of Lord Mowbray.

She made him a sign not to speak, and gently disengaging her hand from Nesta, she went with him into an adjoining room.

CHAPTER XXIV.

When I remember the superintending providence of the gods,
 How greatly it removes my sorrows! Yet when I imagine
 That I possess a clear view of its laws, or that I can look into
 The fortunes of mortals, or their deeds, I am at fault;
 For they are ever changing at different periods of time,
 And the manner of men vary deceptively as their positions change.

EURIPIDES.

* * * *

That one soul should feel the pangs for two,
 As I now grieve exceedingly for her,
 Is a burden most hard to bear.

EURIPIDES.

"Did you get my letter at Florence?"
 inquired Lady Lawrence, when she had
 carefully closed the door between the
 rooms.

"Yes, I got it on my arrival, and one
 also from Eva Dromore, and I have tra-

velled night and day. Is she worse?" he added, in a trembling voice.

"I hope she is sleeping now, but she talked in such a way that I was quite frightened, and thought she was going to heaven, like the moonlight on the sea, and was so happy, and said it was getting dark, but the room was as light as before."

"Let me see her instantly," said Lord Mowbray, in great alarm.

"Step softly, for I hope she is sleeping soundly."

Lord Mowbray did indeed step softly, but he scarcely heard what she said, the objects in the room seemed to swim before his eyes. Candles were burning on a table near the door, but the farther end, where Nesta was lying, was only illumined by the moon.

As the cold pale light fell on her face he started, and his worst fears seemed to be confirmed: he felt he had arrived too late.

"Don't wake her," said Lady Lawrence, when she saw him stoop down close to her.

But Lord Mowbray heard nothing; he was absorbed in his anxiety to discover if

he could feel any breath from those pale lips.

Her forehead was cold; then, in despair, he pressed his lips to hers, and a kiss—the long repressed feelings of a whole life seemed to be breathed forth in passionate adoration:

“Oh, speak to me, dearest Nesta! do not die! I—I will strive all—all I can—to make you happy!”

She slowly opened her eyes and looked up, and the smile which before slept on her face became still more glad.

“I am so happy you are come. Aunt will be glad now, even if—when——”

“You will recover now,” he said, as if inspired. “Dear Lady Lawrence, I must speak to her alone.”

Lady Lawrence went into the next room, and Lord Mowbray, with the strong instinct which deep love gives, determined to try what he had long on his mind to do, since he heard of her illness. He took her hand in his, and talked to her long and earnestly. At first she tried to turn away, but gradually a faint colour overspread her cheeks,

tears started to her eyes, but they were tears of joy. The result of the conversation was shown by Lord Mowbray asking for paper and pen, and calling his own servant.

He wrote a long letter, and, as soon as it was finished, went himself with it to the post. He also wrote another, and despatched his servant with it. There was no telegraph then, so he ordered him to travel, without stopping, to London, and, if Mr. O'Neil were not there, to follow him wherever he was supposed to be, and never to rest till he brought him back to Genoa.

After her long interview with Lord Mowbray, Nesta sank into a quiet sleep, and the next morning a decided improvement was observable in her whole appearance. But still his apprehensions on her account were rather increased than diminished when the daylight showed how thin and ill she appeared.

"Will he arrive in time," he thought, "and will his presence and his love effect a cure?"

"I was very happy last night when I thought I was dying," said Nesta to him

when he wheeled her down to the sea-shore. "I am ungrateful enough to be almost sorry that you brought me back to life again. Do you know, I really feel that you did: I had a kind of perception that you were praying for me so fervently, even before I knew you had arrived. I felt that you were praying so, when—when—— Well, I hope it is all for the best; life seems to me a perplexing maze. I do not see my way to the end."

He endeavoured to soothe, to instil the hope of happiness in this world into her mind, and in the dread lest he should lose her, he found himself pleading for Morgan. And so the days passed on, and Nesta became gradually stronger, and was able to walk with Lord Mowbray's support as far as her favourite seat under the orange-trees by the sea.

And in this close intimacy Lord Mowbray became still better acquainted than he ever was before, with the beautiful stores of thought and feeling that had lain dormant or unknown in her rapidly developing mind. And as his admiration and love

daily increased, his apprehension became more painful lest Morgan should prove unworthy or unable, to appreciate the full value of her character and the inestimable treasure of her love.

While the events just recorded were taking place, Aunt Mary was travelling on a tour in which she devoted her time to the enjoyment of visiting cathedrals, both in England and on the Continent. On her return from this perusal (as she called it) of the stone and marble poems of past centuries, she wrote a few passages, which I will insert :

“What is poetry but happiness—the faculty to draw forth whatever is beautiful, good, or comforting from everything? It is unsinning happiness. Every beautiful thing made by man has been an expression of the joy or hope which was in his mind. Faith in revelation gives this kind of happiness more than anything else, and the fervent faith which seems to have abounded in the middle ages produced the beautiful buildings, graceful ornaments, and thoughtful, loving devices of that period.

“When I look on the works of yet earlier ages, I feel that the persons who built those edifices and carved those ornaments were always searching after beauty, even when they did not fully succeed in attaining it. We may discern the play of imagination—lines and curves that flow gracefully, as if the designer were pleasantly going forth in search of some beauty or good. Sportive knobs, playful devices, and joyous sweeps are visible in the commonest portions of some of the earlier buildings—even in the quaint cornices, where animals are represented running after each other, or making grotesque faces, or holding garlands of flowers in their mouths. The interlacing of the lines and patterns seem to be embracing one another with loving arms: even the very inequalities and irregularities of the buildings and their ornaments seem as if they proceeded from some pleasant or sportive feeling.

“Where is all this happiness and exuberant fancy gone? There does not seem to be a spark of it shown in any modern building.

“There was, moreover, much hope shown in the edifices of ancient heathendom, as well as faith in a superintending power. The confidence the Greeks evinced in immortality, without even the advantage of possessing any positive revelation of it, ought to make us ashamed of our want of faith in that clear evidence of an eternal God which we enjoy. But we are now so proud of our own discoveries, both real and fancied, so much accustomed to grope among facts, and to require that everything should be positively proved and made evident to our bodily senses, that we have not sufficient humility left, to bow down to the mysteries of revelation, and to trust and hope in what we cannot plainly see with our *own* eyes and hear with our *own* ears.

“I am afraid that photography used in portraits tends to cultivate a taste for ugliness. They induce people to be satisfied with their worst looks, and to be reconciled to gracelessness, harshness, and caricature. It is almost impossible that a photograph can give the likeness of a people at their best moments. And *best* moments, when we wear the harmonious expression, which

inward contentment and good feeling gives, ought to be encouraged, multiplied, and coaxed out in every possible way. It should be our constant endeavour to attain permanently the best expression of our best moments, the outward indication of that character of mind and disposition which we would like to transmit in a portrait, and to be known in by those whose opinions we value most. Many people take quite a different view of the case, and imagine that it is an indication of honesty and an absence of vanity to be satisfied with their ugliest expression. But I am afraid the satisfaction they derive from it proceeds more from the besetting sin of these times—self-sufficiency, and an absence of any wish or hope to become better.

“Now, having said all this against photographs, I will put down an idea that has struck me as to their use in these factful days, when the preponderating desire is to possess demonstrations—when doubts about everything which cannot be seen and touched invades the mind, and a prevailing and superintending unseen Providence, which counts every hairs of our heads, and raises our


bodies from the grave, is ignored—in days like these, does not this lately-discovered power of rendering permanent the fleeting expression of our forms and features, of indicating the slightest change in our movements, so that no idle look need ever be unrecorded, but that these things can be stamped visibly by a chemical process—does it not tend to show that we must always be surrounded by those unseen agents who are aware of our every thought and inward feeling?

“As we have been able to discover this mode of recording our own momentary appearances (although the very means by which we speak, or think, or move, is still a complete mystery, even to the most wise and learned of mankind!), does not this faculty of impression, this proof that our common movements *do* produce an effect on the atmosphere which can be rendered comparatively permanent, add to the probability that the Creator of these mysteries which we cannot fathom is likely to have the power of watching over their workings, and of stamping the results of our free will and mental progress, even on and through a permanent eternity?

“I remember having been much struck

by a well-expressed idea of Mr. Babbage's, some years ago, in his Bridgewater Treatise, about the permanent impression our words might produce on the atmosphere. Perhaps some day a record of sound may be discovered, and that unwritten words which we utter may be rendered as permanent as the likenesses of our forms can now be made. To me all these discoveries or probabilities indicate most awfully our individual responsibility, and the importance of unceasing endeavours to make every word we utter, and every expression of our countenance forward our progress heavenwards, and assist others on their road.

“Lamb used to say that his frame of mind during the day was often influenced by the expression (disagreeable or otherwise) he saw on the countenances of strangers whom he met in the streets, or in the course of his walks. I have often felt this in a slighter degree, and it has helped to show me the importance of cultivating that cheerful resignation to our fate, and hope of ultimate happiness, which must stamp the expression of it on our features, and consequently cheer
hers onwards who see us.”



CHAPTER XXV.

Where has reverence for God or virtue
Now any power to avail
By its appearance? Since impiety
Indeed has influence, but virtue
Is slighted and left out of sight
By mortals. And lawlessness
Governs the laws, when there is not
A universal effort among mankind
To avoid provoking God's awful wrath.

EURIPIDES.

It was to be an old-fashioned wedding. Nesta and Morgan were to be married in the church which contained the marble effigies of the De Lacys, and the young people were to return after the ceremony to her own ancestral home, Knutsford Hall, which was only half a mile off, and there pass the honeymoon. Nesta was still so delicate that the doctor had advised that she should have as

much rest as possible, so they considered it best for her that she should have no journey to make after the ceremony.

"What an absurd plan," said Honoria, when she heard Aunt Mary tell the news. "Why I should scarcely feel I was married at all, if I went straight back into my own home. I wonder Morgan can submit to such folly. I daresay he'll be regularly hen-pecked. Those meek, dreamy girls always get their own way, I observe."

"Very often, for true chivalry is called into play by weakness; the strong man likes to protect and cherish—to feel he is of use to those who need protection."

"Probably; and a girl with fifty thousand a year requires a great deal of protection," said Honoria, "so I only hope Morgan will turn out a *preux chevalier*. And I suppose you will go over for the wedding?"

"Yes, I must go and take care of Eva, as Lord Mowbray kindly suggests; and we are all to stay with him at his place near Knutsford Hall."

"Heigh-ho! how dull it will be here when you are gone. I suppose I had better accept

Lady Glenmaurice's invitation to London, for papa says he is too poor to take a house in town next season, and Lady Glenmaurice will like to have me. She is wonderfully fond of me ; she can enjoy all my wild freaks and oddities."

"She does. I know you are her prime favourite at this present moment ; but beware, for if she once becomes disenchanted with you, her hatred will be as intense and unreasonable as her affection is at present. I know her well ; she has had a long succession of favourites, and I have often been obliged to compassionate and comfort the poor girls when she cast them off."

"Well, she is not worldly, at any rate ; and she can only wish me to marry her brother-in-law because she thinks I shall make him happy."

"Which you will not do, of course, poor man ; so I trust he will escape from you both."

"I have a great mind to go over with you," said Honoria, after a pause.

"But you would not come to the wedding, surely?"

"Oh, certainly not. In the first place, I am not invited, though I daresay even I should not be very unwelcome at Stapleton Park, for Lord Mowbray is so anxious to please everybody; but I can't forget that—that——" said Honoria, bursting into tears.

Aunt Mary did not endeavour to console the wretched girl, for she had been disgusted at the hard indifference which she had often showed when Morgan's name was mentioned, and she liked her to be unhappy now because she so richly deserved it.

"But do you feel no regret, no compunction at leaving your father and your poor invalid mother with no other companions than your wild rollicking brothers and little Alice?"

Honoria shrugged her shoulders. "I cannot always remain with them; I can't pass all my life here, so that a little sooner or later can make no difference."

"Then you don't intend to return?"

"No. I shall accept the best offer I get next season. So I will go and tell Florentine to pack up my things." And with a

return of her usually proud and defiant air she left the room.

“Well, me dear girl, I’m sorry yer going to leave us,” said Mr. Verdon, when he heard of his daughter’s determination to accompany Aunt Mary and Eva to England, “and I hope ye’ll be wiser at the end of this journey than ye were the last time you left your own old home. I hope you’ll have learnt by experience, and not throw over a true lover because you think you may get a better or a richer; you’ll live to repent more and more, because you are ambitious, that you played false to the O’Neil. There’s another gone between him and the old barony; we heard to-day, out hunting, that poor young man, Lord Ardfinnan, was killed by a fall from his horse.”

“No—really,” said Honoria; “but is not there another branch of the O’Neils who would inherit first?”

“Yes, there’s the O’Neils of Kiloran, the richest of the whole family, but both these brothers are old bachelors.”

“And they would not inherit the earldom, would they?”

"No, only the old barony; but when Morgan was born he was twelve off from the chance; now, during these few years, eight have dropped off. There was the old Marquis and his four brothers; I remember them all as fresh and healthy as myself, and all four died, or only left daughters, but the other branch succeeded to the earldom, and now this is the second Earl, and he has lost three sons already. If anything happens to the two remaining boys, there will be only the old bachelors of Kiloran between Morgan and the title; and now he marries the heiress, he'll be sure to get it all, for money keeps money warm, and the O'Neils of Kiloran are rolling in wealth."

"Does Morgan know them?"

"No; but it's likely if they get the title, and know it's to come to him, they'll be proud to see the boy, for he certainly does honour to the old name in his public life, and if he became next heir to the old barony of Ardfinnan, probably they would leave everything with it; all those broad lands——"

"That's what old Nurse Sullivan used to say," said Honoria, with a sigh. "There's

some old prophecy about crows, or something—she would have it that the old Earl and his brothers would have no sons: there was a curse on that branch of the family, from some beggar who was turned away from the door, and that all must come to Morgan, because the old castle of Dermot still remains in his possession, where the first Lord Ardfinnan was born; and his branch has succeeded from father to son for ever so many centuries, and that the crows now fly over his land, but I always laughed at those foolish stories.”

“Ah, you may laugh, me girl, but I have seen that there’s a great deal of truth in it, and more depends than we think for on the blessings of the poor.”

Florentine was delighted to hear of this intended departure, for now that “Monsieur O. was really giving up her young lady, ‘elle s’ennuyait à mourir’ in that country.” It was Florentine’s first visit to Ireland, and she hoped her young mistress would marry “grand,” and live in some “fine château in England where there would be visitors who would be more worth speaking to.”

Snooks, the butler, had given warning,

for he found Dingleford Castle too dull when he heard the family were not going to London next season.

"She will make one high marriage now Monsieur O. give her up, I know—and he no worthy of her."

"Why, you were always crying him up to the skies last season," said Snooks, "and flew out at me when I used to put in a word in favour of the Marquis of Dumbleton."

"I did not know then what I know now. Miss Peggy O'Schockingness, she tell me many histories about him and a poor girl, some other O—O—More or something; he took her from her mother and brake her heart; the mother she became mad at losing her child."

"Who—what child, eh?"

"I can't tell the names, they are all alike—Peggy O—O—Shockingness, or Nelly More O—O—but she ran away, and have one child, a boy, just like Mr. O'Neil."

"I suppose you will tell Miss Verdon all this?" said Snooks.

"That I shall, now it is all over," said Mademoiselle Florentine.

CHAPTER XXVI.

Ah, my friends! he who is experienced in sorrow
 Knows that when a sea of troubles comes upon mortals
 Everything is wont to frighten him. Whereas, if fortune
 Prospers with him, he is persuaded
 That the same favourable gale will always blow.
 To me, already full of terror, the gods
 Appear before my eyes hostile in all things,
 And loud cries sound in my ears, but they are not shouts of victory.
 Such is the terror caused by misfortunes which affright my spirit.

ÆSCHYLUS.

WHEN Honoria heard this report about Morgan from her maid, she proceeded at once to Aunt Mary's tower and informed her of it, and ended by saying, "Of course Nesta ought to be informed of this."

"Yes," said Aunt Mary, "but we must first ascertain whether this story is really true. Who is this Peggy O'Shaughnessey who told her?"

"Niece of our old nurse; I will send for

her immediately. But stay; for if she suspected we were going to question her, she would be prepared, and deny all knowledge of it: so come with me, it is not too late; we can go and see her; it is only half a mile to her cabin."

Aunt Mary was much too anxious to ascertain full particulars to allow of any delay, and immediately proceeded with Honoria to her old nurse's cabin. They found Peggy sitting at the door at her spinning-wheel, and she said that "her aunt had gone down to the town to buy a ha'p'orth of snuff." They talked for a few minutes about indifferent things, and then Aunt Mary led the conversation dexterously to Mrs. O'More, and gradually elicited all the information she required. She found the story was the same she had suspected—that the girl's name was Nelly O'More.

In answer to Aunt Mary's inquiry of what had become of the girl, Peggy replied :

"I have heard say that Nelly O'More drowned herself. Mike Flanagan said that he saw her throw herself off the rock at Dermot Castle, that hangs over the torrent, just above the Mermaid's Cave, one moon-

light night, and that he called out for help, and he and two other boys went and searched, but they never found any traces of her body; and no wonder, for there was a whirlpool just under the Mermaid's Cave, and mother says the waters go all under the castle, through some old passages that in ancient times were an underground way to the Abbey of Morne. Oh, it is a fearful spot, and the water boils and seethes as if it was in a caldron, it does; and if you'd ever seen it, it's not likely you'd ever forget it."

Aunt Mary remembered it but too well, for it was there where poor Nesta first saw Morgan, when he sprang across the chasm above the Mermaid's Cave.

It was as Aunt Mary suspected; the mother of the girl lived in Glenfinlan, and her child, a beautiful boy, lived with her. As they were returning home, Aunt Mary informed Honoria of the visit to the very same old woman, and the suspicion which had haunted her and Eva ever since.

"And why did you never tell me all this?" said Honoria. "I am as fit as Eva to be made the spy upon Morgan's private life."

"But Father Murphy denied that he was guilty."

"Ah, that was only because he wants to get Nesta's fortune for Morgan," said Honoria, "that he may build chapels and schools for the Papists. I know what those Jesuitical priests are; they never speak a word of truth; and in spite of all you may say, and all your prejudices in his favour, I am certain that Father Murphy is as bad as the rest of them. I'll go myself to the Widow O'More. I'll make her tell me the truth."

"I will come with you," said Aunt Mary; "but, first, I should like to question Father Murphy more closely about the poor girl and her child."

"He must not tell you, for it was probably under the seal of confession from the girl that he learnt it."

"But he affirmed positively Morgan was not the guilty man."

However, it was of such vital importance on Nesta's account that the truth should be cleared up, that Aunt Mary determined in her own mind to visit Glenfinlan again, and endeavour to elicit the truth from the Widow O'More. This time

she went there with Eva alone, and without saying anything of it to Honoria or Father Murphy. They did not meet with a favourable reception from the old woman, whose wild looks and flighty manner reminded Eva of the first time they were there, when she was not under the softening influence of Father Murphy's presence. She gazed at them with a sort of defiant curiosity that Aunt Mary feared betokened resistance, but the child welcomed them with joyous smiles and wild shouts of triumph. Aunt Mary saw that this time nothing could be gained by circumlocution, so she at once asked the plain question, whether Morgan O'Neil had been the means of depriving her of her daughter?

The woman evidently did not like to be questioned, but when Aunt Mary beseeched her to answer, and said she had reasons for wishing to know, that the happiness or misery of another person depended on the truth being known, the old woman replied: "Well, if yer will have it out, I'll tell yer: thin it was Master Morgan, more's the pity, for the curse that must come on him from the fatherless and widdy."

"And would you take your oath of this?"

"Faix, I suppose I might; that is, if Father Murphy would approve. Is it to prevent his marrying that Saxon heiress you are doing this?"

Aunt Mary answered this question in the true Irish manner, by asking the widow what had become of her daughter after the birth of the child? But this had the effect of exasperating the poor woman: her eyes flashed, her hands clenched, and her lips moved as if in anger. Then she uttered a low plaintive wail, and seemed to forget that any one was present.

Aunt Mary saw that it would be useless to question her any more. But that her confession of Morgan's guilt should be so at variance with Father Murphy's statement, was most perplexing. Then she remembered he had been there only two years, and this sad event must have happened long before; besides, it was not likely he could be so well acquainted with the facts as the girl's own mother. It certainly was her conviction that Morgan was the guilty person.

"I cannot understand it," said Eva, as

they traversed the mountain on their return home. "The old woman can have no motive for declaring that Morgan is the man, and it is equally certain that Father Murphy can have no motive for maintaining that he is not. At all events, the widow must be most likely to know the truth."

"Undoubtedly she must, and therefore we must act upon the authority her declaration gives, and hasten our departure for England; and oh! if it would have the effect of disenchanting Nesta, how fortunate it would be; and for Lord Mowbray's sake, too! If she could but see Morgan in his true colours!"

"But how sad to receive such intelligence only a few days before the one fixed for the wedding. Even to hear that Morgan is suspected of such a crime will be dreadful, indeed, for poor Nesta. For I suppose we should only be able to reach Stapleton Park two or three days before the 24th."

"At all events, Morgan must be questioned, and if he can clear himself, he should have the opportunity of doing so." And Aunt Mary hastened their departure with all speed.

CHAPTER XXVII.

A good man loves to show respect for others.

EURIPIDES.

As the day fixed for the marriage approached, Lord Mowbray grew more restlessly anxious that everything should be arranged in the best manner possible, and that every one should be pleased. He was up early and late superintending all the arrangements, and never allowed himself an instant for thought. He scarcely allowed himself to enjoy a moment's conversation with Nesta, and sometimes he dreaded lest his courage should fail when the eventful day arrived. Nesta and her friends had taken up their quarters in Lord Mowbray's house to allow of some necessary prepara-

tions at Knutsford Hall. Morgan was expected from London in a day or two; they thought Aunt Mary and Eva might be expected the Saturday or Monday before the wedding, which was to take place on the Wednesday. Aunt Mary and her companions had such a long passage from Dublin that they were obliged to sleep at Holyhead, instead of proceeding at once, as they had intended, so that the result was, instead of reaching Stapleton Park on Monday, they arrived there late in the afternoon before the day fixed for the wedding, having left Honoria at Birmingham, with Florentine and Snooks, on her way to London.

“Thank God, we are still just in time,” said Aunt Mary, as they drove up the avenue, for she and Eva clung to the idea that if Morgan could not explain the report satisfactorily, Nesta would be induced to give him up. The first person they met at the hall door was Miss De Lacy herself; she had been watching with great anxiety for them during the whole day. She was still very thin, but her pale cheek flushed with

joy as she ran down the steps to greet them.

"They are all out except me, dearest Eva," she said, as soon as she had taken them into her own boudoir. "How I have longed to read on your face whether you are very angry with me! No, I see you are not angry, but you both look very anxious."

"Yes, we are indeed. Aunt Mary will tell you something you ought to know," said Eva, almost out of breath, and so much agitated that Nesta was afraid she was going to faint.

"Take her to her room, and make her lie down, dear Nesta, and then come back, and I will tell you," said Aunt Mary.

"I am sure she wants rest much more," said Eva, "but her energetic mind will not allow her to take it till she has told you, I know." Aunt Mary then, on Nesta's return, told her all they had heard of the declaration of old Widow O'More.

"I have sometimes thought it," said Nesta; "a sort of horrible, dark, vague suspicion has haunted me night and day, yet I was unwilling ever to let myself think

of it, much less to allow myself to suspect him." Nesta was deadly pale.

"And would you give him up if it prove to be true?"

"Yes," faltered Nesta, "for he would not then be what I feel, what I know he is; yet—Oh, what agony this is! I long to have it cleared up."

"Shall I or Lady Lawrence question Morgan on the subject?"

"Oh! no, that would be so cruel and unjust, and as much as to say that it was true," said Nesta. "I will ask him myself. I would rather read the truth on his countenance: I feel sure—I think—he could not deceive me. I will see him the moment he comes in."

"Should you then be able to resist his persuasions, and keep firm to your determination not to marry him if you find he is guilty? Are you sure that nothing will induce you to consent now nor at any future time?"

"Nothing; I had rather die—much rather; I was so near death at Genoa, and I felt quite happy."

A knock at the door made them start ; but it was only Lord Mowbray, who heard they had arrived, and came to see if Aunt Mary was comfortable in her room. "The others will not be in for some time," he added, as he noticed what he thought was a look of disappointment on Nesta's face at not seeing Morgan ; "they are gone to see the new lodge at Knutsford."

Aunt Mary was touched by the expression on Lord Mowbray's countenance, and her regret was even more than ever increased that Nesta could not have returned his affection, and thought that perhaps she still might do so, if she could be cured of her infatuation for Morgan. "Lord Mowbray's generous devotion deserves to be rewarded," thought Aunt Mary, as she watched the tender, venerating affection he evinced for Nesta.

"You must be dead tired after your long journey ; will you not rest before dinner ?" said he.

Aunt Mary was ready to drop with fatigue, but scarcely liked to lose sight of Nesta till she saw her with Morgan.

"I will go and rest now if you will promise to bring Mr. O'Neil to her the moment he comes in : it is of importance she should see him as soon as possible."

"Certainly; but what can have happened? Is his brother ill?"

"Oh no," said Nesta, who saw Aunt Mary was too agitated to speak. "I will tell you after I have seen Morgan."

"Then Henry has not yet arrived?" asked Aunt Mary.

"No, he does not come till to-morrow morning. I hope they will be reconciled now; but, you know, Morgan parted in anger from his brother, and has been sadly prejudiced against him ever since," said Nesta, as she and Lord Mowbray accompanied Aunt Mary through the long corridor to her room at the farther end.

"And they have not met since?"

"No; he scarcely wished him to be invited," said Lord Mowbray, "and it would not have been done if Nesta had not insisted upon it. This is your room, and Miss Dromore's is next."

At that moment the sound of carriage-

wheels was heard driving up to the door, and they knew that the rest of the party had now returned. Aunt Mary lay down on a sofa in Eva's room, but neither could rest.

"Will she be really strong enough, to keep to her resolution, do you think, if she should become convinced of his guilt? You have known her from a child."

"She has such an innate horror of crime," answered Eva, "that I cannot help thinking that if she could but see Morgan as he is, if she could but know and believe that he has been guilty of such an act, it would then cost her comparatively little to give him up. She now thinks him perfection—refuses to see any faults—and that is why I have dreaded this marriage so much—for fear he should some day do something to inspire her with horror, in some form or another—not that I mean to prejudge this case and say it's true: there's something very mysterious about it."

"But do you think she would give him up if it is true?" persisted Aunt Mary; "if he acknowledges it?"

"If it could be proved to her that it really was her duty to do so," replied Eva, "I think she would; but then he may acknowledge it in such a way as to appeal to her feelings; he may bring forward some extenuating circumstances; he may—and probably would—urge that he had regretted and repented what he had done; that it could not be undone; that he was anxious to make every possible reparation which remained for him to make; that his engagement to her was the turning-point of his life; that it was in her power now to save him by her affection, or to drive him to despair by rejecting him. It is difficult to convince a woman who loves that such an appeal is false, and that it is still her obvious duty to say *no*."

An unwonted shade came over Aunt Mary's pale face. She made no reply; but her thoughts seemed to wander into the far distance of time—perchance, retrospectively. "Would you give him up if it were your case?" inquired Aunt Mary, after a pause.

"Yes," said Eva, but as she replied, a shudder passed over her. She grew very

pale, but an unusual light came into her eye, and her lips were compressed like those of a person nerving themselves to endure deadly pain. "At least," she added, "I would not consent without putting him to two or three years' trial; and if the poor girl were still alive—that beautiful, deeply-feeling girl, as Father Murphy describes her—I would give him up quite. I would say he ought to marry her."

"How strange she cannot love Lord Mowbray!" said Aunt Mary, after another pause; "the personification of all that is noble and good—a sort of Bayard. God grant she may do so still, that her eyes may be opened to Morgan, that she may have strength to——"

They were silent for some time. Aunt Mary started up: "Did you know Henry was on such bad terms with his brother?"

"Yes, but I did not much mind, for I hoped that Morgan would make it up."

Another short period of silence, both tried to rest. The dressing-bell rang, and a moment afterwards Nesta came bounding into the room with radiant looks.

“Oh, Aunt Mary, you will be so glad!” She stopped suddenly, as she perceived Eva. Her whole countenance changed to a bewildered look, and, covering her face with her hands, she burst into tears.

“Why glad? what do you mean?” urged Aunt Mary.

“Morgan is innocent,” sobbed Nesta—
“he can prove it—but come into my room, Aunt Mary, I had rather speak to you alone.”

CHAPTER XXVIII.

Oh Jupiter, why hast thou given to gold certain marks
By which people may plainly discern when it is adulterated,
While among men when it is necessary to discover those who have
 evil designs
No mark is stamped by nature on their bodies.

EURIPIDES.

As soon as Nesta had closed the door of her room on herself and Aunt Mary, she said :

“Morgan says he can prove that he was not guilty, but he hopes that I will take his word for it, because it would be so painful to accuse another person—to be forced to proclaim the real culprit.”

“And you are satisfied with this explanation?” inquired Aunt Mary, with much anxiety.

"Why should I not? for he has offered to write to Father Murphy, and ask him to relate the real facts."

"Is that what the girl confessed to him herself? Then Morgan imagines that she is still alive? This does not tally with the report we heard, that she had drowned herself in the torrent under the ruins of Dermot Castle."

"No; but Morgan had also heard that rumour. It had proved not to be true."

"How comes it that Morgan knows anything about the girl if he was not guilty. There must be some strange mystery, which we cannot fathom."

"There is," said Nesta, with a face of horror. "It is all most sad and miserable, but pray, pray believe me when I tell you that Morgan is innocent. Do not force me, do not force him to say more. He has offered to bring forward the positive proof that he had nothing whatever to do with this sad affair. And why not be satisfied?"

"Let him do so. Let him obtain the proofs from Father Murphy."

"He can do so easily ; but his only grief is that another person, one whom he would rather not mention, will then be implicated."

"Who is that other ?"

"I would rather not tell ; pray do not question me further."

"He told you ?"

"Yes ; I extracted it with the greatest difficulty, and I promised not to tell."

"Will *he* tell me ?"

"There is an awful mystery which really ought not to be unveiled."

"Did he swear it was not himself ?"

"Yes."

"My poor child, you must postpone this wedding till you hear from the girl, till you can confront her with him."

"But it would be the ruin of others."

"Truth ruins no one ; it ought to be known for Eva's sake, it ought——"

"What ! did you suspect that Henry had anything to do with this ?" inquired Nesta, with extreme surprise.

"A vague suspicion, but knowing so well Henry's character, I dismissed it from my

mind as most improbable—I should even say it is impossible.”

“So should I, but Morgan told me various things lately that shook my faith in his brother’s high principles.”

Aunt Mary felt that if the goodness of Henry should prove a delusive dream, she should disbelieve everybody; that if Henry O’Neil were found guilty she should lose all confidence, all trust in human beings; that the whole order of creation—the whole world was gone wrong: and she felt quite sick with horror and dread.

“Surely it would be better to go on with the wedding as we intended,” added Nesta, “and sift into the matter afterwards if you think it necessary.”

“Not without questioning Henry: he ought to have the same opportunity of self-defence you gave Morgan.”

“He will not be here till ten o’clock to-morrow morning; besides, I promised Morgan not to tell any one at all, and I did not tell you. And you would never have suspected Henry had you not heard something which induced you to question—

which made you almost inclined to believe who the person is."

"That is true, but I must think it over."

"Do not breathe a word to Eva, do not trouble her and cloud her happiness."

"Not for worlds, till the real truth is clearly shown."

Aunt Mary avoided being alone with Eva all that evening, lest her looks should betray her; but she was determined that Lady Lawrence and Lord Mowbray should know of the accusation, and if they, after due consideration, judged it was better that the marriage should not be delayed, she would urge the matter no further. To her annoyance they both treated the affair more lightly than she did. They seemed quite satisfied with Morgan's defence, and his offer to obtain the proof from the girl herself.

"This could be done at any time," said Lord Mowbray. "I do not feel that we should be justified in postponing the marriage."

Aunt Mary longed to tell him that he said so because he was afraid of being selfish—of giving way to any hope on his

own account—but she only said what she thought would arouse his anxiety for Nesta.

“I am full of anxiety,” said he, “full of dread on her account. I candidly confess he is *not* the man I should have chosen for her.”

“Then why not catch at this; it might throw a light on his real disposition.”

“Most gladly, if I could feel convinced I were doing right; but just consider how near dying she was, and Morgan O’Neil would hardly have mentioned the proofs did he not know that they would be enough for his innocence.”

Nesta did not go down to dinner, but passed all the evening in Eva’s room.

* * * * *

Henry O’Neil arrived the next morning, and Lord Mowbray had prepared for him a pleasant surprise. The living of Stapleton had become vacant, and he offered it to Henry’s acceptance on his marriage with Eva.

CHAPTER XXIX.

And how, shall I not rejoice with all the righteous joy of my heart
When I hear of my husband's prosperous fortune?

There is a strong necessity that my joy should keep pace with his
success.

Yet still deep consideration induces a dread

Lest he, who is in prosperity, should at some moment fail in his
course.

SOPHOCLES.

AMID cheers and rejoicings, and under triumphal arches, with flowers strewed beneath her feet, the bride was conducted by the husband of her choice to the splendid mansion of her ancestors—the loved home of her youth. As far as the eye could reach, all belonged to her, and she knew that she had given all to him, and it was her blissful duty henceforth to revere him, to obey the idol whom in the depths of her

heart she had long secretly worshipped. Nothing could now separate them, all the world acknowledged that she was his, and the secret adoration she had so long felt was now hallowed and sanctified by the solemn tie and the blessing of God. What fate could be more enviable? Yet, was she quite satisfied? She had always felt, in that church in which she was married, that the marble effigies of her ancestors were looking at her as she sat among them every Sunday; and even as a child she was accustomed to consult the countenances of these figures, and always imagined that they appeared pleased with her when she had endeavoured to do right, but if she had been guilty of any thoughtlessness or childish folly, she thought they looked disapprovingly at her.

She wished to read them on that solemn day, but had no opportunity of doing so during that sacred rite, for her eyes fell first on her mother's saint-like effigy, then a vague dread, a sort of gasping fear came over her, and the tears that will sometimes flow even in our most joyous moments, filled her eyes

and veiled all else from her sight. And now, as she left the church and remembered she had not looked at these monuments, a shadow she could not define came over her, and made her arm tremble in her husband's.

And then she looked up in his face for comfort.

Did she find it there?

But more shouts are heard, crowds of friends surround her, the old people press forward. She bows, and treads on the flower-strewn carpet, and passes with Morgan into the carriage that is waiting to conduct them home.

"There's tears in her eyes," said the old gardener, who had nursed her mother on his knee.

"He's a handsome man, to be sure," said his old wife; "but he's a side-long look out of his eyes; never looks ye straight in the face, like Lord Mowbray."

"Ah, yes, it's terrible bad sure for his lordship; maybe he'll console hisself by-and-by, which he knows now it's all over and done, and can't be helped nohow."

The peasantry are often better judges of

character at first sight than more educated people.

* * * * *

When a new married couple are not entirely one—when there is not an equally strong feeling on both sides—the remainder of a wedding-day after the guests have been left, is a dull blank. The sudden cessation of the bustle and excitement which have preceded that day's ceremony, is almost painful.

As Nesta passed with Morgan under the great portico and walked through the long picture-gallery at Knutsford Hall, she looked up at the portraits of her ancestors with a half fear that they, too, would not look approvingly at her. She had accustomed herself to consult them as she used to do the effigies in the church, and fancied they frowned if she had done wrong, or smiled when she strove to do her best.

"What a grim old fellow that is with the armour," said Morgan; "he has a face you would hardly like to meet in a dark lonely road. He looks quite angry."

"It must be the light," said Nesta, "for

do you know I have often thought that dear old face seemed quite to smile upon me. Here, come and look at him from this window; now he looks less angry."

She tried to think so, but she could not deceive herself. Old Roland De Lacy, the Royalist, undoubtedly frowned upon the newly-married pair.

"Let us go into the library," said Morgan, "I suppose the newspapers are come, are they not?" He threw himself into an easy-chair with a half sigh, and took up the *Times*. "I wonder you decided to spend the whole day here. I should have thought you would have liked a journey—it would have been much more amusing for you."

"You know it was decided so because I am not strong. Lord Mowbray thought——"

"Always Lord Mowbray—you seem to look up to him for everything," said Morgan, in a harsh undertone that grated on her ear. "If you are always quoting him, I shall think you regret not having married him. Ha!" he muttered to himself, after a pause, as he glanced at the paper, "'two young sons of Lord Galtinglass died of scarletina.'

You may have a coronet yet, without Lord Mowbray's assistance."

"And the fortune?" inquired Nesta, who overheard these words, and vaguely feared that if Morgan became rich he would scarcely value her so much; she would not have been the use to him she had hoped.

"No; that will, no doubt, be all divided among the last Earl's four daughters. But no; the old Mr. O'Neils of Kiloran will have all the property eventually. We must go and visit them when we go to Ireland."

"Shall you like to go there soon?" inquired Nesta.

"I shall have to go over for the general election, but you can do as you like."

As if she would not like to go wherever he did!

"There is no place I like so much," she replied; "besides, Eva must return to her father soon. How delightful it will be when Henry and she are settled at Stapleton. Such a pretty rectory. It was so kind of Lord Mowbray."

"Lord Mowbray and Eva—I suppose I shall never hear of any one else except these

two, who are so perfect in your eyes," said Morgan, with some bitterness.

"Poor Eva!" thought she, and as a sudden thought occurred to her mind, which in the excitement she had almost forgotten, she added: "He is to be ordained next month. Ah, how dreadful it would be if—if—if the bishop heard that he had——He might refuse to ordain him."

"Yes; of course he would not ordain him," said Morgan, with a bitter smile, which Nesta's eyes were, perhaps fortunately, too full of tears to perceive; for she thought of Henry's losing all his prospects, and Eva being miserable.

"Their love has been so smooth hitherto, it will be doubly sad if there should now be any drawback to their happiness."

"They can't expect always to be prosperous."

"But you have quite made it up with Henry, have you not?"

"Yes," said Morgan, with compressed lips, and a look which bewildered and perplexed Nesta.

"You surely would not like to see his prospects ruined?"

"Perhaps he deserves that they should be."

"But it will not be known; it need not be known," she said, imploringly.

"Not unless those fools inquire into it. If they are so very meddling as to do so——"

"Ah, they must not—I am sure I never said to Aunt Mary that——"

"Were they actually goading you to search into it?"

"Yes; for imagine what a dreadful thing it is, that such a crime should be imputed to him and he not be able to——"

"Then you let her suspect it was Henry?"

"She guessed it from something Father Murphy said."

Morgan's countenance brightened.

"And who else knew about this?"

"Honoriam."

"Honoriam!" said Morgan, with a dark scowl; "who could have told her?"

Nesta explained that her maid talked of it.

"Well, remember that it will be entirely your fault, or Aunt Mary's, if Eva's happiness is poisoned; if you allow her to suspect that Henry has acted wrong. I'd rather bear the blame myself," continued

Morgan, with an air of candour, "much rather; so pray be cautious."

"He is generous," thought Nesta; "I knew it. But," she said aloud, "Honorina knows you are suspected of this, and I am afraid she may disclose it."

"Never fear, leave her to me."

"To you? What—I thought—I thought that——"

"That she basely deceived me; yes, that is true; but I suppose we must apparently be friends when we meet, and in London that must be often."

A sickening feeling of dread—or was it jealousy?—crept over her, but she endeavoured to discard the thought. "It must be this dreadful anxiety about Eva's fate that has depressed me all day," thought she, as she went to change her dress for dinner. "Such a sad, woeful fate, and she deserves everything that any one can do to make her happy."

But in those long hours since the solemn rite that bound them together, Nesta had caught glimpses of expressions on Morgan's face which she had never seen before. She felt as if her eyes had suddenly opened on a

long dim vista into some dark and troubled abyss, where no light could ever penetrate.

Have you ever seen a beautiful engraving, from a drawing of Lady Diana Beauclerc's, illustrating Burger's "Leonora," translated by Mr. Spencer? Look at that drawing, where Leonora is represented as flying away with the ghost of her lover. She is clinging to him, although she is half convinced that he is only the skeleton of his former self, and that he is conducting her to the grave where his remains are lying. Look at that print, and you will see Nesta's face on her wedding-day.

* * * * *

The wedding guests returned to Lord Mowbray's, Stapleton Park, after they had seen the bridal pair proceed along the flower-strewn and festal-arched path to Knutsford Hall. There was to be great rejoicing that day among the rich and poor. Dancing and music under tents for the peasantry of both parishes; games, and prizes, and suppers; fireworks to be seen in the grounds and from the terraces of the castle.

Lord Mowbray seemed to be like a

number of Sir B. R——'s birds, and was in "every place at once."* If there was a poor child not tall enough to reach the table, spread with tea and cakes, Lord Mowbray was sure to come behind and place a higher chair, or put the cake or cup within its reach. Yet, at the same time, Aunt Mary and Eva felt that he was constantly attending to them, and endeavouring to distract their thoughts, lest they should feel sad at the departure of Nesta.

Aunt Mary intended to have gone back to Glenmaurice the next day, but, in consequence of the mystery still connected with the sad story of Nelly O'More, she resolved to return to Ireland with Eva, in order to clear up, if possible, the accusation against Henry O'Neil. A note she received from Nesta the morning after the wedding only tended to confirm the resolution she had made to keep the matter as secret as possible, lest any report should injure Henry's prospects.

* *Vide* Sir B. R——'s speech in the House. "I am not like a bird, in two places at once."

CHAPTER XXX.

For he, on whom my all rested, my husband,
Thou knowest well, turned out the worst of men.
And indeed those women who have much feeling and mind
Are a most miserable race!
And there is too the greatest risk, whether we obtain a bad
Or a good husband. For divorces bring no good fame
To women, nor can they repudiate their husbands.
But a woman has to enter upon new customs and duties:
She ought to be a prophetess, for it is impossible she can tell by her
own experience
What kind of lot she is most likely to find in her union.
And indeed if, when we perform our duty well,
Our husband shall remain with us, and not impose a severe yoke,
Our life is enviable. But if this be not the case, then to die were
far better!
But a man when he is displeased at remaining with those at home,
Is wont to go abroad, and can relieve his heart's woe
By having recourse to some other friends or companions;
While we, on the contrary, are obliged to look up to one soul, and
rest our all on him alone.

EURIPIDES.

THE Easter recess was over, and, after a
short week's honeymoon, the bride and

bridegroom arrived at De Lacy House. Nesta had wished that her aunt, Lady Lawrence, should continue to live with them; as their house was such a large one, she could have an apartment and establishment entirely to herself; but Morgan had given that lady to understand that he would not like this arrangement. She had, therefore, engaged a house in Grosvenor-place, which she resolved to occupy during the season; for, although she disliked London, she wished to be near her niece. It was to be a very gay season, for several royal foreign princes were expected, and the great London houses were to be opened for a series of fêtes to do honour to the illustrious visitors.

Morgan expressed a wish that some balls and concerts should be given, and that his wife should assume the position she ought to attain as one of the most influential of London ladies.

Poor Nesta, whose health was still very delicate, could not help feeling some degree of apprehension at the duties and (to her) labours which were required of her. How-

ever, she had now but one object in life, so she resolved to conceal her dismay, and set about with energy to send out invitations and make arrangements for the fêtes.

"Let me see your visiting book," said Morgan, one morning when he found her writing a pile of invitations. "Lady Buckland—who is she? I never heard of such a person. You must consult some leading lady; it would never do to have all those unknown people."

"But they are old friends of my mother's."

"Very likely; but that is just the reason that they are incapable of being suitable acquaintances for her young daughter."

"Who am I to consult?"

"Let me think. There's the old Duchess of Aldrington. No; she's too stiff in her ideas—one of the last century."

"The Duchess of Dalton, perhaps; I like her and her daughter, that nice Lady Diana Myland, very much, and they know everybody."

"Very true, but her politics would put it quite out of the question."

" Her politics?"

" Yes, she is on the wrong side."

" Politics ! I did not know she had any," said Nesta, with surprise.

" You have much to learn—stay, there's Lady Teviot."

" Oh, I don't like her at all, so very impertinent. I heard her quite scolding the Duke of —— for asking Eva to his ball."

" The very reason she would help to keep ours select. Just the person. I'll write to her, and ask as a favour that she will instruct you in the important and most difficult task of forming acquaintances of a suitable kind, and of correcting and weeding your visiting book."

Now if there was a person in the world she disliked, it was this very Lady Teviot.

" But surely I have heard that she flirts," urged Nesta.

" To be sure she does, you little goose."

" But that cannot be right."

" Many things are necessary that are not right," said Morgan, with bitterness ; " and most people must stoop to rise—must bow to enter the low arch that leads to the wide ple of fame."

"Yet why should we want to rise more. I have heard that the parties my poor mother gave at this very house, were said to be the pleasantest in London."

"No doubt, and I hope they will be again; but society has changed since those times, different elements are required, and it is composed of very different ingredients. By-the-by, I saw Honoria driving with Lady Glenmaurice as I came home yesterday; she will not leave any points untried; I expect to see her at the very summit of the London world in a year or two, and I should not be surprised if she became Lady Dumbleton after all."

"Oh, I hope not, for I do so wish that he may marry that dear little Lady Diana."

"He won't do that, and if he did she will never acquire much influence; but Honoria in Dumbleton House, would have the whole world at her feet."

"And I never shall," thought Nesta, with a sigh; but the sigh was only because Morgan appeared to set such a strong value on the attainment of influence. Her only com-

fort was that he said Lady Diana never would, and she certainly would rather resemble Lady Diana than Honoria.

Honoria was likely to become queen of the world, and certainly in those days there was much more scope for a woman of ambition than there is now. During the sort of interregnum when there was no acting and influential court—in the time that intervened between the stately rule of Queen Charlotte and the mild and graceful sway of Queen Victoria, London society was governed by the fortunate ladies whom fashion had enthroned. And these idols, placed on their envied pinnacle by popular choice, were probably more proud of their elevation, and certainly ruled with a more despotic sway, than the born royal mistress of a court. Why were they chosen, and what were the chief requisites to ensure success in this race of fashion? The question was difficult to answer, for the very reason that the high post seemed within every one's reach, and yet rank and riches combined, often failed to attain it. Beauty and charm of manner in a well-born woman sometimes gave the

palm ; but in one or two cases beauty even was wanting, yet the fashion-elected queen reigned for a time with unprecedented severity.

Honorina fancied that if she married a man of rank, and even moderate riches, she had in herself all the requisites, and would become the most influential of society's queens. And this was her great desire.

Lady Teviot returned a very gracious answer to Morgan's note, for she approved highly of him, and said, "if Mrs. O'Neil De Lacy would bring her visiting-book to her next morning, before three o'clock, she would give her the best advice."

"You will come there with me?"

"It will be impossible, for I am engaged on a committee. I am very sorry as you seem to wish it; but I could be of no use."

So Nesta proceeded alone, book in hand, to the great lady's house, and was shown up to the drawing-room. She met with a look that was intended to crush her, but it had a contrary effect. Nesta saw she was disliked, and with a composed and dignified air she gazed full into Lady Teviot's proud

face with such a quiet decision in her calm blue eyes, that the great lady was quite thrown back by it, and seemed to understand that it was not easy to domineer over that frail creature.

"You wish to consult me about your visiting-book," said Lady Teviot, with a condescending smile.

"My husband wishes it," answered Nesta, with an unconcerned and indifferent air.

"Well, let me look at your book."

Lady Teviot soon saw numerous names she would have given her ears to have in hers, and therefore appeared to look on them with contempt. "Lady Hammond, Countess of Sunningham—quite out of date, never do to invite them; but you may return their visits. Duchess of Daventry, dowdy-looking housekeeper, but I suppose you must invite her as her politics are all right. But Lady Oldmore and her two daughters, silly, weak-minded girls, who always look as if they thought one's dress too décoltée, and think everything improper except their own 'plaisirs innocents;' and I can really say of the mother, as the witty French lady did,

‘ Elle n’a qu’un seul défaut—c’est qu’elle est vraiment insupportable.’ ”

“ Are they not to be invited ? ” interrupted Nesta, and her blue eyes were raised with a look of earnest inquiry, under which Lady Teviot did not feel happy or at ease. For Nesta knew well that these Oldmores were particularly agreeable, in fact some of the really nicest persons of her acquaintance.

“ I do not exactly say that ; but you are not to cultivate them more than can be helped ; not to allow them to bring any one to your house ; refuse even their near relations—if they beg on their knees for an invitation for any of their vulgar married daughters refuse it.”

“ Not even Lady Loudon ? ”

“ No, certainly not,” said Lady Teviot, with sharpness, for she was a personal enemy of hers. “ Lady Jane Townland and Miss Townlands—scratch them out of your book, and gradually drop them quite.”

“ I shall not do that,” said Nesta, in a low voice, but with a firm sound in it that vibrated strongly in Lady Teviot’s ears, and made her look up with flashing eyes.

“ If you invite them to your ball I wash my hands of it; I will take care to have nothing to do with it.”

“ I will not invite them, as my husband has asked you to arrange the invitations; but I will not give up their acquaintance, for they are my mother’s old friends,” said Nesta, in the same tone.

Lady Teviot pressed her lips firmly together and said no more—she was already Nesta’s bitter enemy.

CHAPTER XXXI.

Ah me; in what circumstances am I placed?

What secret bane have I received under my roof?

SOPHOCLES.

* * * * *

Has truth perished because thou art unfortunate?

EURIPIDES.

“I CAN make nothing of that meek-faced wife of yours—she is as obstinate as a little mule, and too stupid to understand what I told her,” said Lady Teviot, when she met Morgan in the evening. “I bestowed one of my early hours, an entire precious hour, upon her this morning to very little purpose.”

“I am sorry she engrossed so much of your valuable time,” said Morgan.

“Yes, she is impertinently stupid. I

fear you have made a great sacrifice at the shrine of riches."

The proud blood of the O'Neils boiled at this imputation: he was on the point of saying, "Perhaps not so great a sacrifice as my lady had made for rank." Lord Teviot was old and gouty, and almost imbecile when she had married him at eighteen. She saw that she had gone too far, and as the popular speaker was a person she must keep on good terms with, she added with a conciliatory smile, "But I dare say yours will be a delightful ball, and I shall do my best to ensure its success. On the 14th? that's next Thursday week. I will make the Duchess of Rumbledown put off hers till the following week, instead of the 13th, that people may be quite fresh for yours," and with an approving and condescending nod she glided away.

"You must not do that, pray don't take so much trouble," said Morgan, as he endeavoured to follow her through the crowded rooms.

"Let her do it," said Mr. Praid, who came up during the latter part of their con-

versation ; “ she will enjoy the excuse it gives her to exercise the power she possesses : she likes to tyrannise over that poor, fat, good-natured Duchess. So your dear little wife is going to make her *début* as candidate for royal honours. I am afraid she is too good and simple-minded ; besides she has not sufficient bodily strength to wage the necessary war with all these sturdy ladies, and not one of the ruling potentates is worthy to wipe the dust from her beautiful little feet,” he continued, in a louder tone, as two well-known ladies, who were struggling hard to reach the height of their ambition, passed near.

“ Whose beautiful little foot are you talking of, Mr. Praid ? pray show it to me, for you are reckoned a marvellously good judge,” said Lady Gordon.

“ Mrs. O’Neil De Lacy’s ; and she has a complexion, too, that will require no artificial aid to improve its dazzling purity.”

Lady Gordon’s weak point was her sallow skin, which made her always unwilling to be seen by daylight.

“ Oh, a pink and white beauty is she ?

and where is this wonder of loveliness to be seen ?”

“ At her own home on the 14th, when the Prince of ——— and Princess will dine there, and the beautiful ball-room, which has not been used for half a century, will be opened to the *crème de la crème*.”

“ Ah, that little heiress : ah, I forgot, she married some Irish fortune-hunter, did not she ?”

Morgan was still within hearing, but Lady Gordon either had not seen, or did not remember him.

“ I believe we are all fortune-hunters in some shape,” said Mr. Praid ; “ at least, I suppose it is the hope of some honour or advantage that makes us submit to be squeezed up together in this hot passage.”

“ Is the silver-footed dame here to-night, or has she sent you to trumpet her praises, and puff her party ?” inquired Lady Gordon.

“ Perhaps you may find her with the Duchess of Dalton and Lady Diana Myland in the concert-room.”

Lady Gordon pushed on vigorously through the crowd.

"I shall like to see her attacking all three, for she has never been able to push herself into the Dalton set—come, you should help your pretty wife to keep clear of that dark-minded and dark-faced woman."

"Yes, and I owe you thanks, for you took my part when she attacked me," said Morgan.

"I am afraid you will not often have cause to feel gratitude of that kind. I mean to keep a sharp look-out, and unless you make that little angel happy——" An uplifted finger and flashing eye that menaced war to the knife, said the rest.

The two men found more obstacles to their progress through the crowded rooms than Lady Gordon had, and when at last they reached the farther room they met that dark lady coming from it with an angry scowl on her handsome face. It vanished, however, as soon as she perceived them, and with her most gracious smile she said to Morgan, "I am so glad to renew my acquaintance with you, Mr. O'Neil. I have just been talking to your charming wife. She has collected all the beauties round her

—you will find that splendid Miss Verdon, the reigning belle of last season, there, talking to Lord Dumbleton.”

“I have no doubt we shall,” muttered Morgan between his teeth.

They found Nesta sitting between the Duchess of Dalton and Lady Diana, and in the recess of a deep window at a little distance they caught a glimpse of Honoria’s back, near Lord Dumbleton.

“She will not turn round,” said Mr. Praid; “she has had a whole season’s experience in the art of flirtation. Few people except elder brothers ever see more than the back of a girl who has become desperate.”

“What do you mean?” said little Mr. Surtees, who had overheard the conversation.

“Why half the room would interrupt her; she would have to bow and speak to dozens of people, and she knows how to prevent herself from seeing any one, and if she is large, and at the same time clever, she’ll contrive to screen the object of her

attack also from observation and consequent escape."

"What a venomous being you are, always finding fault; now I call that a splendid girl, and think that Lord Dumbleton could not do better," said Mr. Surtees.

"Lady Diana has improved this year; she is growing quite pretty, and how happy she looks," said Mr. Praid to Morgan, as they approached the group.

"Yes, and she must be either very insensible, or a consummate actress, for certainly she shows no jealousy at the flirtation which she must so plainly see."

"We have been so amused with Lady Gordon and several others, who have been making up to Mrs. De Lacy, and want invitations for her ball," said Lady Diana to Morgan, when he and Mr. Praid came near. "And she has behaved admirably; you have no idea how well she contrived to be quite civil without committing herself."

"But we met the dark lady looking very black."

"Ah, but that was because mamma does

not like to make her acquaintance, and she could not succeed in contriving to draw her into conversation when she was talking with Mrs. De Lacy. Ah, look, there's Lady Teviot struggling through the doorway! What fun," continued Lady Diana. "I see she is in agony because she has caught sight of Cousin Dumbleton in the window recess with Miss Verdon. There, she has almost knocked down poor Miss Spinks in her effort to get through. Well done, she has succeeded, and now we shall see her charge impudently the recess, and she will soon storm those beautiful shoulders and splendid brilliant black plaits, and rout my poor cousin out of his pleasant retreat."

"No, she will not be able to pass the Prince of —— and his surrounding circle," said Mr. Praid.

"Oh, yes, trust me, no prince will stop her when she is bent on interrupting a flirtation she does not approve of. See, I am right; she has reached them, and actually taken up her position in the recess between them."

“That was a clever stroke, and she has even succeeded in making them both look pleased at the interruption,” said Morgan.

“Well done, Miss Honoria, you are becoming an excellent actress.”

“That she always was; her talent only wanted to be brought out and fully developed,” said Mr. Praid; “and see, they are all three bearing down upon us, and we must compose our faces to propriety.”

“I have succeeded, dear Mrs. De Lacy,” said Lady Teviot, “in making the Duchess of Rumbledown put off her ball till the following week.”

“I did not know Lady Teviot disliked Honoria,” said Morgan to Mr. Praid, as they withdrew to a little distance.

“She does not dislike her, but she will not allow her to become Lady Dumbleton, for she would then be too great a rival.”

“Well, I suppose Honoria will have to put up at last with Lord Glenmaurice,” said Morgan.

“You should take your dear little wife home,” said Lady Diana, coming up to

Morgan. "I see she is very tired, and unless you economise her strength, she will not last through the season."

"Quite true," said her mother, "and it is time for us all to go, I think."

They moved on towards the door, and Lady Diana playfully put Nesta's arm in her husband's.

"Now, go and put her in a warm place in the cloak-room, while you call her carriage. You see I can teach you how to behave as a married man."

"I *am* tired," whispered Nesta, as she passed out of the room through the space Lady Diana had succeeded in clearing for them; "and what a kind, dear creature that Lady Diana is."

When Morgan had deposited Nesta in the cloak-room, there was some delay, as the servant did not come, and he found himself in a corner of the hall near Honoria.

"Stay a moment—do not go," she said, in a constrained whisper; "tell me, am I to come to your ball?"

"Of course. But the Glenmaurices are invited, are they not?"

“ Oh, yes ; but— but—I thought you would not like me to come ; but I suppose you don’t care whether I do or not.”

“ Why should I ?”

“ Ah well, but you never, never did, not even three years ago. I know you never did : I have heard all about that poor girl, and Aunt Mary and everybody knows that the report we heard was true.”

“ It is false.”

“ No, I know it is true ; and you pretended to care for me at that very time.”

“ Mrs. O’Neil De Lacy’s carriage stops the way !”

“ One word more,” said Honoria ; “ am I to come ?”

“ Of course,” he said, with a bitter smile.

“ And you really hate me now !”

CHAPTER XXXII.

Many are the forms of the things proceeding from the gods,
And many unexpected things the gods accomplish,
And what were expected are not fulfilled,
But an unlooked-for means the god has found.
Such has been the event of this affair.

EURIPIDES.

HONORIA went to the ball at De Lacy House, and her numerous admirers affirmed that she had never appeared so triumphantly beautiful before. Lord Dumbleton seemed to think so too, for he danced four times with her, and the foreign princes were dazzled by her charms.

“She will certainly be the reigning beauty again this season. I almost thought Lady Jane would cut her out; but, as every one says, she is nothing to be compared to Miss

Verdon," said Jack Surtees to Mr. Praid, as they lounged through the rooms towards the end of the evening.

"I suppose so, she certainly is very beautiful."

"Our handsome host is also of that opinion—see, they have made up the quarrel," said Mr. Surtees, as his keen eyes caught sight of Honoria at the farther end of the conservatory. "I hope that good little wife did not see the look that passed then."

"She saw others, if I mistake not," thought Mr. Praid, as he left Mr. Surtees, and walked quickly to the end where the two were standing.

Honoria started as he appeared, and she saw the grave expression on his face.

"The Princess of D——'s going, Mr. O'Neil, and you must not forget your duties as host and as representative of two noble houses—of a line of ancestors who have never yet disgraced their name. I will take care of Miss Verdon," he added. Morgan looked daggers at him, but proceeded towards the ball-room.

"How foolish you are, Mr. Praid," said

Honoria, when Morgan was out of hearing.
“What can you mean by looking so grave?”

“I mean that it is a very grave matter. I mean that if you do not care about breaking that young creature’s heart, you may care to mar your own prospects. You want to marry well, if possible; you would like to marry Lord Dumbleton if you could get him; you mean to captivate some good parti. It is impossible that you mean, Miss Verdon, to be an old maid. I know you better. But you must remember that all London knows your history—that every time you speak to Mr. O’Neil or look at him, hundreds of envious eyes will watch you; remember that you will most bitterly rue the consequences.”

“I suppose so; but—but—one cannot entirely forget——”

“You must, though, forget whatever you did not choose to remember when the recollection would have been inconvenient to you. You know well that you quarrelled with him; it was entirely your own doing.”

“But I have lately discovered that he never loved me, that all the time he cared for a poor girl in the neighbourhood.”

“And therefore you wish him to begin now to care for you—now that he has vowed to love that dear interesting wife. For shame, Miss Verdon! Now, remember, if I see the slightest indication of a flirtation with Mr. O’Neil, I shall write to your father, and pray him to come over and take you away. Now, remember this.”

“I will, I will indeed,” said Honoria, who saw that he would fulfil his threat. “I will be wiser,” she added, in a more playful tone, as they perceived some groups of people coming into the conservatory. Nearly all the guests were now gone, and Lady Lawrence was complimenting Nesta on the success of her fête.

“Yes, I suppose it was a pleasant ball,” said Nesta, with a weary look; “but I wonder why Mowbray never came; I have been watching for him all the evening.”

“I did not think he would,” said Lady Lawrence, “for you know he now never goes to balls.”

“No; but I thought he would like to have seen this old ball-room opened once more.”

CHAPTER XXXIII.

And every one who has studied what is good,
Is ashamed to be called a bad man.

EURIPIDES.

AUNT MARY did not go to town that season, but remained in her old quarters at Dingleford Castle. She had gone to Ireland with Eva immediately after Nesta's wedding, on purpose to ascertain, if possible, the truth about Morgan O'Neil's accusation against his brother.

As yet she could discover nothing more positive than what she learnt before Morgan's marriage. She went up to Glenfinlan to visit the Widow O'More several times quite alone, as it was important to prevent Eva, and, in fact, every one else, from sus-

pecting that Henry O'Neil was in any way connected with the scandalous story. She found that old Mrs. O'More persisted in her accusation against Morgan, but she invariably refused to disclose where her daughter was, or whether she were alive or dead.

Father Murphy, also, said that he was quite ignorant about the girl's fate, as he had never seen or heard of her since the beginning of the preceding December.

When Aunt Mary inquired where the interview had taken place at that time, he said that the girl came to his house late one evening, her face muffled up in the hood of her cloak, and implored him to hear her confession before she left the country ; that she seemed fearfully agitated, and for some time could scarcely speak for crying. It seemed that this was all that Father Murphy deemed it right to disclose, and, after mature reflection, Aunt Mary deemed that the prudent course was to let the matter rest, for if she were to institute a search for the girl by the police, or other means, some fatal rumour might be set afloat that would injure Henry O'Neil's prospects and em-

bitter Eva's life. And Aunt Mary's greatest interest was now centred in that beautiful girl.

The Rectory, where she lived, was only two miles from Dingleford Castle, along the mountain path, and scarcely a day passed that they did not meet, either at the village school or in their walks and rides.

It was now the merry month of May, and while poor Nesta and Honoria and all the so-called gay people in London were pushing, and jostling, and struggling against each other through crowded rooms, apparently always longing and striving to get where they were not; one fine moonlight night Aunt Mary and Eva were sitting on a rustic bench in the Rectory garden.

Henry O'Neil had been expected that afternoon by the Dublin coach, which passed the gate at three o'clock, and Aunt Mary had remained to see him. But when the coach passed he was not in it, nor was there any message or letter.

They all endeavoured to attribute the delay to contrary winds and a bad passage, or to business in Dublin; but Aunt Mary

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felt so anxious about him that she determined to remain till he should come, and so she sent a boy across the mountain-path to inform Mrs. Verdon of her intention, lest she should sit up for her.

"There is no wind: he must have had a quiet passage," said Eva.

"Perhaps he was not able to reach Holyhead in time for the packet," suggested Aunt Mary, who endeavoured not to betray by word or look the fear which troubled her.

"That's true," said Eva. "How you always contrive to console me. You do even about those melancholy letters from Nesta."

"We must hope, we must try to do so, otherwise we should die very soon. If we allow ourselves to be depressed by anticipations of misfortune as well as the reality, we double our suffering. Now, at this moment, look around at this lovely scene—look at the moonbeams sparkling and dancing in a line of light on the sea, and glistening on the distant rocks and evergreen woods. The leaves of the arbutus glisten like silver and the dark and jagged

outlines of the mountains are clearly defined against the starlit sky. God has given us eyes to see and to love it all, and to enjoy the song of birds and hum of insects, the harmonious ripple of the sea as it gently kisses the sand before us, and the distant echo of the waterfall that rushes over the rock; the delicious smell of budding flowers and green leaves—and these all recal to our memory the hallowed words, that ‘not a sparrow falls to the ground without Our Father, that all our hairs are numbered:’ that He giveth us all this to enjoy—to gather strength to combat our sorrows when they come.”

“Yes, it is ungrateful to anticipate misfortunes for others or ourselves, but I can’t help often feeling *regret*—oh, such deep regret—that Nesta did not marry Lord Mowbray.”

“We can’t know—but listen!” said Aunt Mary, as she heard something which sounded like carriage-wheels. “No, it is only the rustling of the branches and the distant waterfalls.”

“Oh, but it becomes louder. Yes, it is—

it is a carriage," said Eva, as she sprang up and ran across the little garden to look down the road.

A country cart soon appeared, winding down the white moonlit road.

"He is not likely to be in that," said Aunt Mary, who had followed Eva to the gate.

"Ah, but I am sure it is Henry; and see, he has jumped out; he sees us—yes, it is Henry himself."

She ran out, and Aunt Mary soon after saw that the tall figure that hastened forward to meet her was Henry O'Neil.

"What could have delayed you so long?" inquired Eva, as soon as the first joyful greetings were over. "Here is Aunt Mary—she has waited on purpose to see you."

"I have had a most disagreeable adventure—a most strange interview."

"Do not tell Eva anything disagreeable," interrupted Aunt Mary; "let her enjoy the delight she feels at seeing you safe. Go in, dear Eva, and tell them he is come, and get supper ready, for I am sure he must be hungry." And then she pressed Henry's

arm, and endeavoured to make him understand that she wished to speak to him alone.

"Do not say a word about it," whispered Aunt Mary, as soon as Eva had turned away.

"Why, how do you—what do you suspect?"

"Never mind; say nothing to any human being about any interview or any adventure you may have had. I will tell you my reasons to-morrow, if you will come up to my tower—or, no, I will meet you on the road, half way between this and the castle, if you can contrive to leave Eva at the school, and say you will come and fetch me."

"What can it be—why make such a mystery?"

"Does your adventure in any way relate to the Widow O'More's daughter?"

Aunt Mary felt his arm tremble with agitation.

"How can you know this?"

"I do; and this is the reason you must

be silent, and attribute your delay to any cause you like."

At this moment all the party came out in the moonlight to welcome the young man. Aunt Mary felt relieved that she had just had time to caution him.

"I will return to Dingleford now that I have seen him safe. I know you have but one spare room, and the moonlight ride on old Jessie will be delightful. I dare say the boy Joe has returned, and he can go with me."

Of course they all protested against the plan, but it was exactly the kind of thing Aunt Mary liked, so she carried her point, and started in the bright moonlight up through the arbutus woods with little Joe, who was to sleep in one of the out-houses of the castle, and return early in the morning to the rectory.

Henry O'Neil had not yet entered into holy orders, for the death of his old friend, the Bishop of —, had occurred suddenly, just as he was to have passed the examination. This occurrence had caused some

delay, but he hoped it would not be now long postponed, and that the next summer would see him established in the Rectory at Stapleton. Eva was so happy in her affection for him and the knowledge of his love; her trust was so implicit in his unchanging affection; she was so happy in her own father's house, that she felt no impatience for the arrival of the important day.

Eva's first inquiry, after they had sat down to supper, was whether he had seen Nesta on his way through London, and she was disappointed to find that he had not found her at home when he called.

"We have not heard from her for nearly a fortnight, and in her last letter she said the fatigue of all she had to undergo in the excitement of the season was very great. It is so sad that Morgan forces her to enter into it all when she is really so weak."

"It is, indeed," said Henry; "but I suppose his object is to increase his political interest, and she is anxious to please him in every way."

The next morning Eva's anxiety respecting Nesta was relieved by the arrival of a

letter written in better spirits. She said: "Although I am very tired with our ball last night (the third we have had), I must write to tell you of an event which happened at it. Lord Dumbleton proposed to his 'Cousin Di,' as he calls her, and the first person to whom he announced the joyful news that she had accepted him was Mr. Praid.

"You know what a dear, nice old man he is, and it seems he had long wished that this match should take place, for he was so overjoyed when he heard it, that he insisted on my dancing a quadrille with him to celebrate 'the victory.'

"As I never dance, I protested vigorously against it; but he was so resolved on it, that, before I knew where I was, he pulled me into a quadrille, and I found myself dancing. I made all sorts of excuses to get off, and said that people would think it so strange.

"'That is exactly the reason,' said the provoking man. 'It will draw every one's attention to the fact, and circulate the good news all the quicker.' And then he went about telling everybody, and they all

laughed, and it made quite a sensation, and I happened to be near Honoria when the report reached her ears.

“ Poor girl, she turned quite pale, but said she could not believe it, till Mr. Praid told her to go and ask Lord Dumbleton himself. I am sorry she is disappointed, but I cannot help being glad for dear Lady Diana, because I think she really cares for her cousin, and he is a good, kind fellow, and so I think they will be very, very happy.

“ Aunt Lawrence says that she heard before the end of the evening that Honoria told Lady Teviot she was engaged to Lord Glenmaurice, and was very glad to hear that Lord Dumbleton was going to marry his cousin ; but I think there must be some mistake about this. I was very sorry to miss Henry. It does me good to think of you now both so happy together ; I can fancy you reading this letter in the little Rectory garden, and that lovely view before your eyes. How I wish—but no, it is so wrong to wish oneself anywhere else but where one happens to be, particularly when it is through Morgan’s wish that I am here.

But you know I never liked London, and that I do so immensely enjoy the country—that is, I enjoy the common hedges and ditches, and every little pleasure of sight and rural sound. But I suppose when the season is ended we shall come over to Carrigroghan, for Morgan is full of projects, thank God, to regenerate dear Old Ireland. This is my great hope and comfort, and often carries me through the long nights, when I am either at those dreadful parties where he wishes me to go, or setting up for him at home till he returns from the House.”

CHAPTER XXXIV.

You see along the flowing torrents in winter, how
Those trees that yield preserve their branches,
But those which rigidly resist are torn up by the roots and perish.
In the same manner, if, in managing a ship, the cable
Being firmly drawn gives no way, it is upset, and downwards
Turned, with reverséd benches, the captain thenceforth navigates the
wreck.

Then yield, and the turning away of your wrath accord to me,
For if any prudence within me, although younger,
I possess in this case, I say it is far better
That a man should naturally be full of all knowledge,
But if not, for nature does not incline with such favour to befriend
all,

It is then good to learn from those who advise well.

SOPHOCLES.

AUNT MARY did not sleep very well after her moonlight ride, for she was tormented with anxiety about this discovery and accusation, which she feared had been made relating to Henry O'Neil. The vague dread

of some fatal disclosure, which had been hanging over their heads for several months, was approaching, and threatened to assume the form of reality. Whether Henry were either guilty or innocent, the scandalous reports concerning him could not longer be concealed from Eva, and from other persons. The hours seemed interminable, and she heard the old clock strike every quarter during the long night. At last the morning, a bright Irish morning, dawned. Aunt Mary, mounted on Jessie, proceeded to the summit of the mountain-pass. She had not long to wait for Henry, as he was equally impatient to hear what she could have to say.

“ You must relate to me first the adventure you had yesterday, and then I will tell you, if I find it necessary, what has reached my ears.”

“ It is a most strange accusation,” said Henry, “ but I can scarcely account for the extreme annoyance it has given me; after all, it may be only some clever excuse to extort money. When the coach stopped to change horses at Cloghan, a beggar, or rather a man dressed like a beggar, for he appeared as if

he had seen better days, came and rather insolently asked me to give him a five-pound note. Of course I refused, and then he threatened that if I did not he would make public the details of some occurrence which would ruin my prospects in life. He also said, if I would come for a moment into the field at the back of the inn he would tell me. I began to think he was mad; but an uncontrollable curiosity impelled me to go, and hear what he wished to disclose. So I followed him into a field near, and when we could not be overheard nor observed by the other travellers, he told me that he was uncle to a girl called Nelly O'More, and that he knew I had seduced her, and if I did not give him five pounds, he could produce the proof that must convict me of being guilty of the crime. When I indignantly disclaimed all knowledge of it, he said Father Murphy could prove my guilt. On seeing my astonishment and horror, the man went on to describe the girl's appearance, and to relate that her mother lived in a wild spot called Glenfinlan; that the poor child that was born lived now with its grandmother.

When he mentioned Glenfinlan, I suddenly remembered having seen a very handsome girl one day when Morgan and I were up there, and I remember afterwards cautioning him about her, for I observed that he went oftener in that direction than anywhere else, and used to go very often into the cottage; but I did not imagine there was anything more in his attention than the amusement afforded by talking to a handsome girl, who evidently possessed the wit and that kind of wild inherent poetry of expression, which often characterises the Irish peasants, particularly in the wilder parts of the country; and I imagined that his love for Honoria, which he then even talked about, would prevent any dangerous consequences."

"And you never saw the girl since that summer?"

"Never, nor did I ever hear her name mentioned till the man yesterday related the wonderful story."

"Did you give him the five pounds?"

"Of course not; but he declared most vehemently that unless I paid him he would

make declarations which must ruin my prospects."

"It is true; you are accused of this."

"By whom? what can have given rise to such an accusation?"

"Your own brother!"

"Oh, my God!" said Henry, covering his face with his hands. After a pause he added: "Then it must be true, and my worst fears are realised. Oh wretched Morgan; he must have persuaded the unfortunate girl to make a false confession to the priest and perjure herself."

"I am afraid that it must be so, for I cannot and will not believe in your guilt," said Aunt Mary, with firmness. "My advice is," she added, after a pause, "to take no notice of it in any way, and, above all, not to tell a word of it to Eva."

"You are right; I will say nothing; but how dreadful it is to think of Morgan's base deceit. This must be to revenge himself for the objection I expressed to his intention of proposing to Nesta. I did all I could to dissuade him from it."

"I suppose so; but I never could have

believed that he possessed such baseness; he has a most unfathomable disposition—a character I could never clearly read.”

“How strange it is that with all his talents and intellectual superiority, he should stoop to such vile deceit to attain his ends. I wonder whether any of this sad story ever reached Nesta’s ears?”

“It did; and the sight of the beautiful boy who lives with his grandmother, was the main cause of that sudden illness after visiting Glenfinlan before she was taken abroad.”

“She suspected it even then?”

“So she afterwards told me when I informed her of the reports Honoria heard, and of the story related to me by her old nurse’s niece. I hastened over to England in consequence, but only reached Stapleton the day before her marriage: she then informed Morgan of all I had told her, and he justified himself by this extraordinary accusation of you. I came over to Ireland on purpose to try and ascertain the truth. Mrs. O’More persisted in her statement that Morgan was the guilty man. But she

would not, and Father Murphy could not, give me any clue as to where the poor girl is."

"Then Nesta believes that I am guilty?"

"I am afraid so. But the fact is, we ought to hope she does, poor child, for it would break her heart to know that Morgan could accuse you wrongfully."

"It is most embarrassing; but what shall be done if this man—if the girl comes forward herself and accuses me?"

"Ah, there is the difficulty I have long dreaded. I see no light, no means of escape. The only support I have had through all the misery of contemplating these disclosures for a long time past, is a deep conviction that you are innocent, and that sooner or later the truth will be shown."

"But, in the mean time, I may lose all hope of what I value most of all—my hold on Eva's heart."

"I do not think she would believe if there were ever such clear proofs—not if the girl herself said so."

"I hope not, I trust not; but what a terrible trial for her faith—her confidence

in me and ruin, utter ruin in my profession."

"Quite true ; all this I have lived through over and over again ; but now is the time to remember all you were and are going to preach to others, and remember that Eva will love you through good report and evil, for better for worse : nothing will shake her, so with her good opinion unchanged you can defy the whole world. But see, there she comes ; remember how important it is for her sake to remove from your countenance all traces of anxiety ; do not let yourself betray your horror at Morgan's perfidy, but strive hard that no trace of it be seen on your countenance, and do not allow yourself to appear depressed : continue to look happy, and try to be so."

"I thought you would never come," said Eva, as she ran to meet them up the steep path ; "and see the good news I have had in Nesta's letter ; you will be so glad that 'Cousin Di'—that nice, dear girl—is going to marry Lord Dumbleton. Look, here is her letter."

"Well," said Aunt Mary, "I suppose,

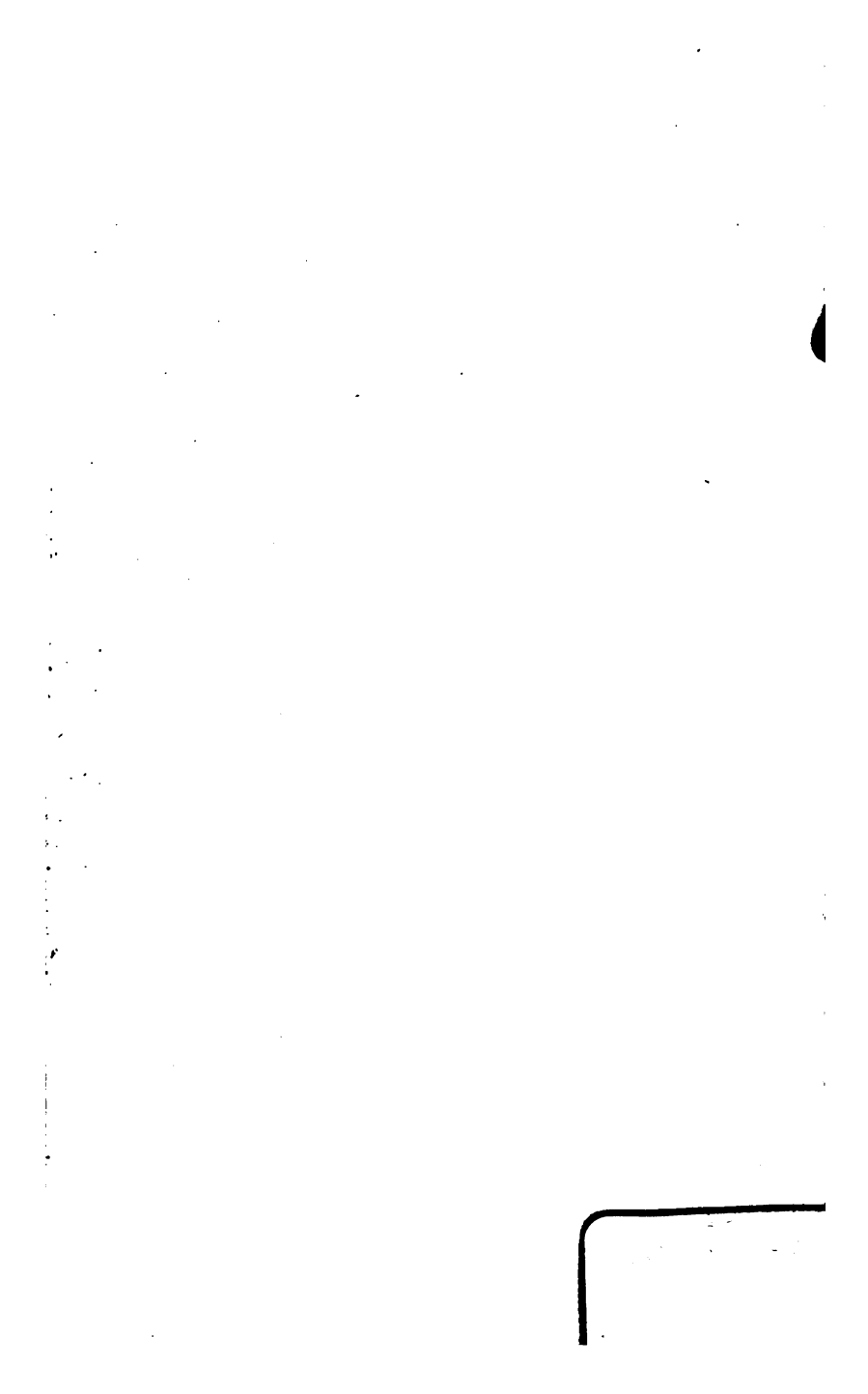
now, Honoria will put up with my poor dear cousin, old Glenmaurice. How strange; I predicted that fate two years ago, before she ever saw him, when she told me that I had one of my far-off expressions, and that I seemed to see into futurity."

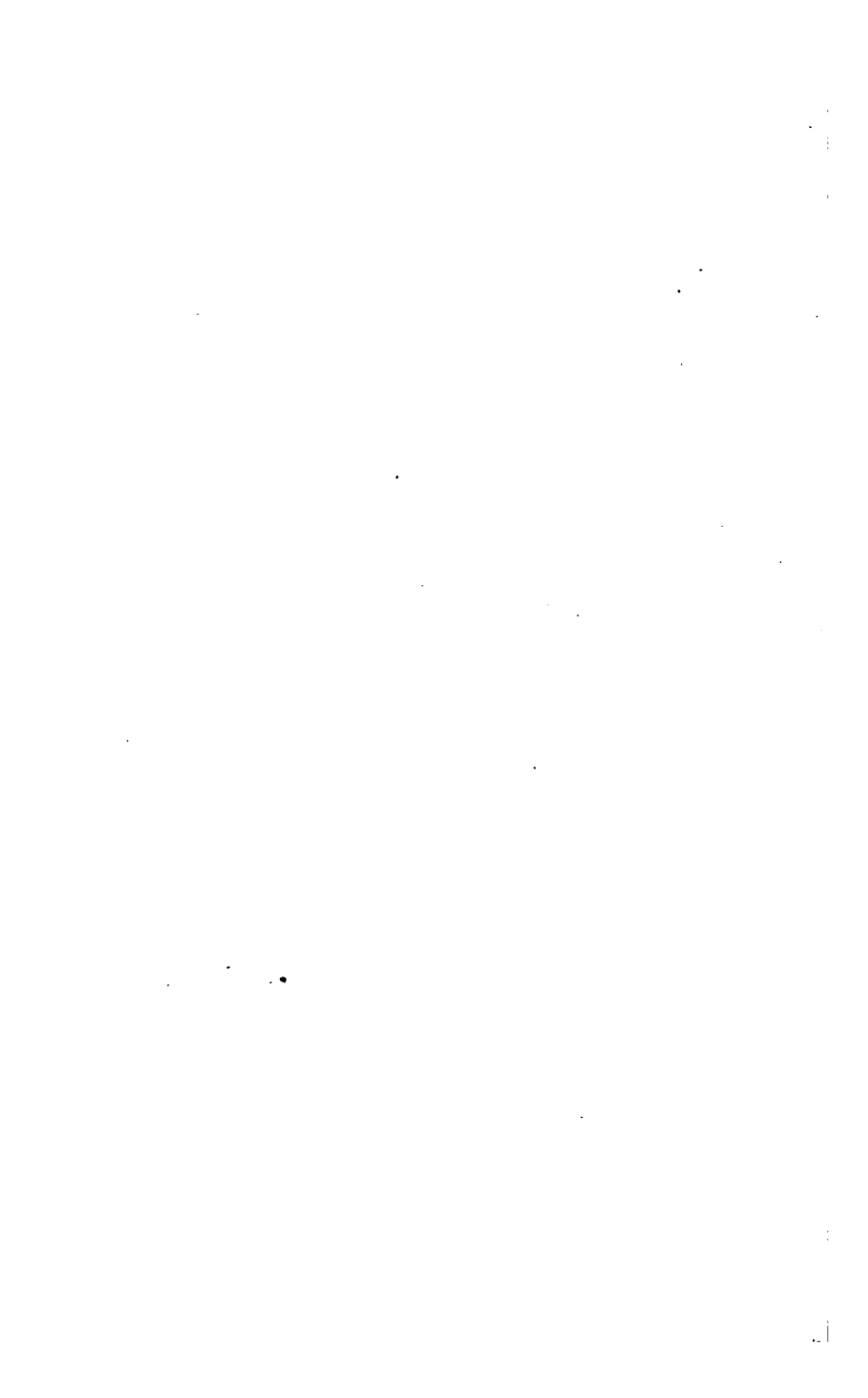
"Yes," said Eva; "and I remember she once told me so last year, but she laughed at the idea of your prediction ever coming true. He is a very kind, good man, is he not?"

"Much too good for her, I am afraid; but I suppose he deserves to suffer for his folly in falling in love with a wild young girl: he is more than sixty, and very gouty. His riches and rank are her temptation, I fear. He has great parliamentary influence, so much so that he has been offered a dukedom, but he is very independent, and not at all ambitious."



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